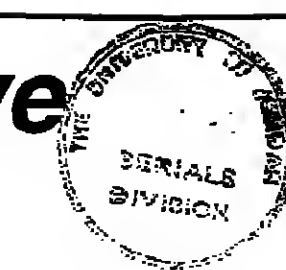


Window on Jordan

Who says Jordanians have no sense of humor!

By Marwan Asmar
Star Staff Writer
WHOEVER SAID that Jordanians don't have a sense of humor should have his head examined. Of course we enjoy humor as much as anybody else. We see it on the streets, in cafes, at home, between friends, and even in the office. There is always a place for a good joke—the wry humor that is designed to perk and bring color into our lives.
However, this is not the general picture that foreigners have of us. Despite You-

self Gheshan's short-lived experiment in the satirical weekly *Abd Rabbo*, Jordanian newspapers are dedicating more space to light social cartoons and funny columnists, like Mohammad Toubalieh of *Ad Dustour*. But Jordanians can never compete with the Egyptians or the Lebanese with their world-famous sense of humor. We are still branded as one of the most gloomy people around. Visitors say that Jordanians are always wearing on their expressionless and glum faces. Whether we like it or not, this is certainly how others perceive us. We are more



Continued on page 2

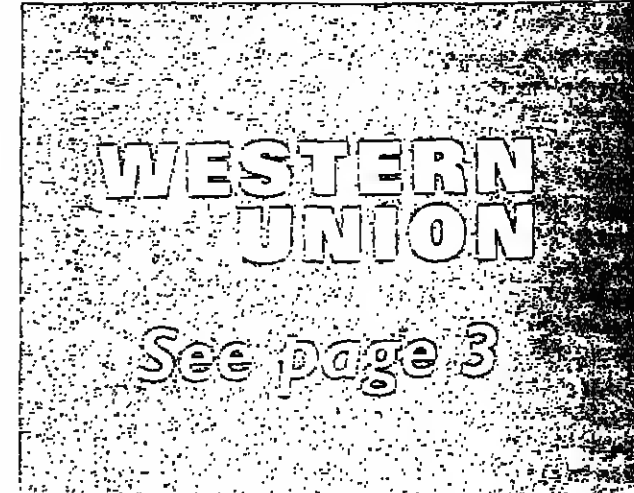
The Star



Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français de Star

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Spécial cinéma: tout sur le festival franco-arabe page 9



AMMAN, 26 JUNE — 2 JULY 1997, VOLUME 8, NUMBER 5, 350 fils

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Lord Steel says peace process is brain-dead

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Mysteries of Arab art

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Egyptian court overturns ban on female circumcision

By John Lancaster

CAIRO—A court struck down a government ban on the widely practiced ritual known as female circumcision Tuesday, dealing a blow to human rights activists who have argued that the procedure is cruel, unnecessary and damaging to women's sexual and reproductive health.

The ruling was a victory for Islamic fundamentalists who claim that female circumcision—called female genital mutilation by its critics—protects women from what they consider the consequences of excessive sexual desire as well as sexually transmitted diseases and other maladies.

It also demonstrated the continued influence of Islamic fundamentalists within Egyptian courts, whose conservative rulings on social and religious issues are often at odds with the views of secular-minded ministers in the military-backed government of President Hosni Mubarak.

Tuesday's ruling, which prompted cheers from the predominantly male audience, overturned a decree last July by Health Minister Ismail Sallam banning doctors from performing the operation, which involves the full or partial removal of the clitoris on girls before they reach puberty.

"I feel joyful," Sheikh Yusef Badry, a conservative Islamic cleric who sued to overturn the ban, said in a telephone interview Tuesday evening. "The judge returned to Islam, and he recognized that (the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) ordered Muslims to do this operation. ... A woman can enjoy her sexual feelings with her husband, but if we cut off this piece, she will be able to control herself."

Badry was joined in the lawsuit by Munir Fawzi, a British-trained gynecologist and professor at Cairo's Ain Shams University who defends the practice on both religious and medical grounds. Although it overturned the government decree, the mid-level administrative court did not rule out a ban on female circumcision, saying parliament could enact such a law. But human rights activists said parliament is unlikely to do so, given the continued popularity of the practice, and they vowed to appeal the ruling.

Netanyahu survives vote, but coalition begins to crumble

Levy boycotts Knesset session, threaten to resign if Sharon is named finance minister

Star Staff Writer

and news agencies
ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has survived a parliamentary vote of no-confidence Tuesday, but his government appears shaky. Several key coalition members refused to support the year-old Likud-led government.

There was never any real possibility that Prime Minister Netanyahu's government would fall as a result of Tuesday's vote. But the fact that several members of the ruling coalition abstained—including Foreign Minister David Levy—points to a significant weakening of support for Netanyahu. Key members of the premier's coalition say they no longer trust him, but they stopped short of actually

voting against the government.

"I'm very happy that the no confidence fell. I predicted as much. I told you that the government would hold," Netanyahu told reporters after his government defeated the motion by a 55-30 majority in the 120-member parliament.

The debate in the parliament on the opposition no-confidence motions was angry and tense. Replying for the government, Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi stunned opposition and coalition members alike, when he launched a personal attack against Ehud Barak, leader of the opposition Labour Party. He referred to an old charge that when Mr Barak was army chief of staff, he abandoned



wounded soldiers in a notorious military training accident. Mr Netanyahu's first year

Musa says 'we should not let peace process die'

AMMAN (Star)—Egyptian

Foreign Minister Dr. Amr Moussa warned Tuesday that the present stalemate in the peace process will bring back the region to the cycle of violence. He called for the need to create a new regional system in the Middle East based on a permanent solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

He described the peace process as a major process that "we should not let or allow it to die."

Speaking at the International Leadership Academy, which concluded its meetings at the University of Jordan Tuesday, Dr. Moussa added that saving the peace process can only be achieved by implementing the land for peace principle and the principles agreed upon in Oslo which provides for the final



status negotiations and the redeployment of Israeli forces. He stressed that the peace process must be based on the implementation of the Oslo agreement.

He also stressed the need to resume negotiations of all the major issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict such as water, Jerusalem, borders, refugees and statehood.

He pointed out that Israel must stop building settlements and move to the final status negotiations.

Dr. Moussa also met with Prime Minister Dr. Abdel Salam Majali, who also participated in the academy's meetings. Dr. Moussa, whose visit lasted for two and half hours, was seen off by Foreign Minister Dr. Fayez Al Tarawneh.

Pizza-loving teenager ready to become czar

By Vanora Bennett

KOSTROMA, Russia—He's short, squat and 16 years old, lives in Spain and likes pizza. But Grand Duke Georgy Mikhailovich Romanov is ready to hail his modern European life, if his people call on him, and become czar of Russia.

"I don't know what the people will want," this unlikely autocrat told the Russian newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. But he and his mother, Grand Duchess Maria, who say they have the best claim to the throne among the dozens of descendants of the last czar, Nicholas II, plan to visit Russia

this summer. There the boy prince intends to swear the traditional vow of the czar, or czar-in-waiting, to "Russia, the Orthodox faith and the imperial house."

The place they have chosen for the rite is an idyllic vision of eternal Russia—the onion-domed Ipatievsky Monastery on the Volga River here, spiritual birthplace of the Romanov dynasty, which ruled Russia for 300 years.

The question pundits started asking—Could Yeltsin, whose final term expires in 2000, mean to restore a constitutional

monarchy?—has been raised several times since 1991, as the president flirted quietly with the Romanovs.

Kremlin officials tentatively make comparisons with the Spanish royal family. King Juan Carlos I was groomed for 20 years to take the throne, and did so in 1975 after dictator Gen. Francisco Franco died.

Georgy's grandfather, Grand Duke Vladimir Romanov, visited Russia in 1991. Since his death, Georgy and his mother have requested permission to make a permanent home in Russia. There has been no official reply.

In January, NTV network anchor Yevgeny Kiselyov raised the idea of restoring a constitutional monarchy, suggesting it might be better for

Yeltsin to be replaced by a Romanov than by a Communist.

"The Kremlin might be quite serious about restoring the monarchy," journalist Alexander Minkin wrote in the newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*. "Kiselyov is close to the Kremlin. What he says is not accidental. The Kremlin uses him to test public reaction."

But public reaction has not been positive. To modern Russians, the idea of a czar is an anachronism. Even some monarchists are against recognizing Georgy as czar.

Georgy's mother, granddaughters and great-grandfather all made marriages that broke the old imperial law of succession and could bar him from the throne.

Medical report concludes Dakamseh suffers from 'psychological disorders'

AMMAN (Star)—At the latest session of his trial, Wednesday, Corp. Ahmad Al Dakamseh said he was not guilty and claimed that his action—the slaying of eight Israeli school girls last March in Baqoura—was provoked by his victims.

Testifying in his own defence, Dakamseh told the five-man military panel on Wednesday that investigators sought the help of "a female fortune teller" to find out whether he carried out the shooting on political grounds or if he had links with foreign countries.

Last week the court decided to refer Dakamseh to psychiatric examination after a prosecution witness testified that the defendant may be suffering from mental disorders.

Two psychiatrists from Al Hussein Medical Center, who examined the defendant, presented their report to the court on Wednesday. Their report concluded that Dakamseh is suffering from "psychological disorders."

However, the defendant's defence lawyer, Mr. Hussein Mjalli, rejected the report describing it as an attempt to assassinate the character of his client.

In his lengthy testimony, Dakamseh rejected claims by the military psychiatrist that he suffers from "strong sexual impulses", pointing out that these are "rumors."

Dakamseh said he was provoked by the laugh-



ter of the Israeli girls while he was praying and added that they took some photos of him.

Military Prosecutor Muhanad Hijazi denied accusations by the defendant that he was subjected to torture while he was in custody at Amman's military jail.

Lt. Col. Hijazi said that the defendant's injuries were self-inflicted when he beat himself against the cell door with his body in an attempt to escape from captivity.

Dakamseh's trial continues today, Thursday.

Irbid Flower Auction A great service for area florists

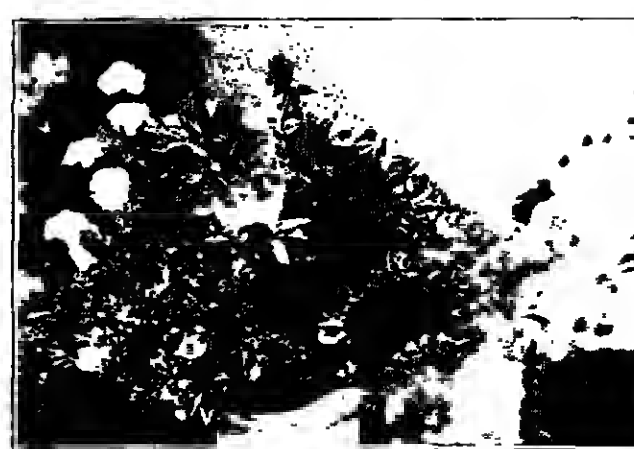
By Elise Y. Sadoun

Special to The Star

IRBID—The Amman Flower Auction, Irbid Branch opened this month to meet the cut flower needs of the Irbid area florists. Meant to be a wholesale distribution for the Irbid area flower shops and not for sale directly to the public, it has been seen as a godsend by area florists.

Flower shops in this part of the country saw a real need for such a branch as they had to travel back and forth to Amman each week. They went through quite an ordeal each week to buy the flowers needed for their shops.

"We had to drive to Amman once or twice a week to buy flowers. It was expensive as we had to hire a truck and pay for the gas. We also lost business as we had to shut down



Good business: Now available in Irbid too

our shops while we made the trip," said Mr. Said Margi of Al Qukab Flowers, a customer of the new Flower Auction.

Fresh cut flowers are very popular in Irbid. They are usually purchased for weddings, as well as engagement parties, get-well gifts, congratulations for new births, and general gifts of love and friendship.

According to Mr. Al Qukab, the largest volume of flowers and arrangements are purchased on Thursday and Friday, the traditional wedding days. However, since the florists had to buy their flowers in advance, it was difficult to accurately predict the daily needs of their shops. They either had too many flowers, which spoiled and went to waste, or they ran out before a trip to Amman could be made, thus losing potential business.

Mr. Ibrahim Kessab of Al Shamee Flowers on Idnun street in Irbid said, "Before, our flowers weren't very fresh. Now, we can buy fresh flowers daily according to our needs."

The new Flower Auction in Irbid currently carries at least 20 varieties of cut flowers of every size and color. They

include gladiolas, roses, 50 varieties of Lilies, Lisianthus, baby's breath, Lisianthus, carnations, and chrysanthemums. The brand new Flower Auction is located off Baghdad Street behind the south police station in Irbid. It is identified by a large banner announcing "Amman Flower Auction: Irbid Branch."

The Auction is privately owned by an Amman partnership, and is managed by Mr. Mazen Al Ghalyani.

All daily operations and management in Irbid is performed by Mr. Ahmad Qablan. There has been much interest in the Auction from the large and small florists in the local area.

Approximate daily sales have already reached JD 250, but with the main summer season set to begin in July, sales are expected to increase substantially. The general market for flowers in Irbid is approximately one-fifth of the Amman market.

The Irbid Flower Exchange is the second branch of the Amman Flower Auction to be

Continued on page 2

People of Dhirar town want Minister of Interior and Balqa governor punished

AMMAN (Star)—Last Monday was an eventful day for the peaceful residents of the Dhirar Bin Al Azwar town in the Deir Allah district in the Jordan Valley. Just before dawn, when people were still asleep, armed Public Security forces broke into houses, kicked owners and their families out before bulldozers pulled the houses down according to various sources.

According to news reports based on statements made by witnesses, some families were not given the opportunity to change their clothes. Witnesses claimed that they were verbally and physically abused by members of the security forces leading to confrontations in which 16 policemen and two civilians were injured.

The situation worsened when people tried to prevent bulldozers from demolishing their houses, which the government says were built illegally on state land. More clashes followed.

The demolition of houses was supervised by the Balqa governor acting on the orders of the Minister of Interior. Villagers pleaded with the governor to give them some time to talk to senior officials, but he

declined, witnesses said. Some home owners claimed that their houses were legal and that they had the documents to prove that their building licences.

The town's mayor was injured in the confrontations which took place in the house of Lower House deputy Ali Al Shatti, where some village women took refuge. Security forces allegedly chased down the villagers to Shatti's house and fired bullets causing some damage to the house. Among those injured were Al Shatti's mother and father.

"The Jordan Valley Authority and the governor of Balqa gave orders to bulldoze some houses in Dhirar town, claiming that they are violating the building code," deputy Al Shatti was quoted as saying.

He denied these allegations and said the houses were built according to licences from the Jordan Valley Authority and the local municipality.

"When I discussed the matter with officials, in particular with Acting Prime Minister Dr. Fawad Al Anani, I was able to convince him to delay the removal of these houses until the end of this week," Al

Shatti said. "However, the Minister of Interior ignored Dr. Anani's orders and gave the go-ahead to the governor and policemen to destroy the houses."

Al Shatti's parents were wounded when policemen stormed into their house to chase villagers who had taken refuge in his house. They also arrested his brother.

After being detained for two days, the deputy's brother, Ismael Al Shatti, said that "although we showed the building licences to the governor and the policemen, they were not convinced. As farmers, we expected to be rewarded by the government, instead our houses were destroyed."

About 6000 citizens (mostly from Al Shatti tribe) have been living in Dhirar since the 1960s. The area is one of the poorest in the Kingdom with residents depending on farming to make a living. They have been waiting for years for the government to honor its pledge to give them farming land.

"Police arrested my brother and demolished his house, which was built more than 15 years ago," said another Shatti brother. "Because he had no money he could never



finish the house although he has a building licence.

The government's move was heavily criticized by deputies and the press as ill-timed and ill-planned.

Most people in the stricken town live below the poverty line. The people of the town were hoping for government assistance and have made many appeals for government aid. Now deputy Al Shatti is calling on the King to punish those responsible for Monday's raid and wants the government to compensate those whose houses were torn down.

On Wednesday, a statement by the citi-

zens of Dhirar Bin Al Azwar town said Monday's incident resulted in the destruction of 10 houses and the uprooting of hundreds of trees in Al Jahalin and Fanoush villages.

The statement rejected statements made by Minister of Interior Nasser Rashid to Al Rai newspaper to which he accused deputy Al Shatti of provoking the clashes. The people of the town accused the minister of giving orders to demolish their houses which led to the clashes that ensued. "Those who are in charge should receive severe punishment, namely the Minister of Interior and Balqa governor and its police chief," the statement said. ■

Pizza-loving teenager ready to become czar

Continued from page 1

throne. His mother married a German prince. George's opponents—and his father—say the boy's family name is not Romanov, after his mother's family, but Hohenzollern, after his father's. His grandfather married a nonroyal Georgian-Russian aristocrat. His great-grandfather married a non-Orthodox Lutheran.

Prince Nikolai Romanov, a cousin viewed by many as the real head of the royal house, does not want to be czar but calls George's plans to swear a czarovich's vow "a charade."

The down-to-earth mayor of Kostroma, Boris K. Korobov, agrees. He has postponed George's oath-taking ceremony "until the Romanovs can restore order inside their own dynasty."

The Kremlin has taken note. Nentsov aides said recently that the idea of giving George some kind of official status had been discussed and rejected, although George still could return to Russia as a private individual.

In the quiet shade of the Ipatievsky Monastery, the languid police guard only yawned and grinned at the idea of George. "Sure, we're interested in the real czars. My teenage daughter collects pictures of Nicholas II," said George E. Sarapyanov. "But we have enough problems feeding ourselves and finding work without worrying about a new czar. Anyway, what has that far kid from Spain got to do with Russia?" ■

LA Times
Washington Post News Service

Two convicted women executed in Swaqa

AMMAN (Star)—Two women convicted of murdering a man, cutting his body into pieces, and mutilating his head before disposing of his body, were hanged to death at dawn Wednesday at Swaqa Rehabilitation Center.

Amira Salim (31), a Syrian, wife of the victim Murad Mohammed Yusuf, was convicted on premeditated murder charges along with her neighbor Eedah Hussein, a Jordanian.

The court had sentenced the two women to die after listening to evidence that proved that the two women had conspired to kill the victim and then carried out their cold blooded

murder.

The victim and his wife had moved to live in Safawi Jordan 10 years ago. Amira became close friends to Eedah and confided in her. The two women agreed to kill the victim who allegedly abused his wife and beat her constantly.

On the evening of 30 March 1996 and when Eedah's husband had left for business, Amira called her neighbor and asked her to get her husband's revolver. Both women then entered the victim's bedroom and asked him to lie on the floor and then shot him a number of times. He later died of his injuries.

The two women then sat

down to drink coffee in front of the victim's dead body. Then they dragged the body to the bathroom and cut it into eight pieces and put them in plastic bags. They then burnt the victim's head on a kerosene stove to mutilate his features. They later disposed of the body in a septic tank belonging to Eedah's house. They also burnt the victim's clothes.

Two days later Amira contacted the police to report that her husband had disappeared. Police began its investigation and suspected foul play and after some time were able to extract confessions from the two murderers. ■

Who says that Jordanians have no sense of humor!

Continued from page 1

sedate, far less extrovert, more inhibited and certainly far less lively.

This how a Lebanese visitor to Jordan saw us after having lived in the country for some time.

He said that despite Lebanon's civil war and the high cost of living, the Lebanese know how to enjoy themselves. "Why can't you people be like that?"

The usual answer is not convincing. Jordanians are said to be serious because they are overburdened with politics. It is a feeble excuse.

Of course the view that Jordanians lack a sense of humor is totally rejected by some. Indeed, extensive research has been conducted precisely on this point.

"Jordanians, as other people from different countries, create and appreciate jokes on multi-tude of issues whether social, political, sexual or religious ones," says Dr. Abdullah Al Shunnaq, a professor of linguistics in Yarmouk University.

After a study of 100 Yarmouk University students, he concluded that "Northern Jordanians, particularly young people from Irbid, Mafraq and Ajloun, create, enjoy and appreciate listening to jokes, and puns."

Al Shunnaq says that humor has no boundaries, despite the conservative nature of society. Indeed, these jokes are cracked on different social occasions, and can be seen as a way of

breaking out of the every day monotony of life.

What is interesting he suggests, is that in addition to jokes that are made up, there are those that are especially adapted by students and people themselves to suit their particular region or area. In his study for example, it was students from the north.

He found out that for example there are jokes being made about a tiny village outside Irbid, which he gave the fictional name of Mahbula (witless). Everyone poked fun at the village. People from Mahbula are seen as thick headed and naive.

As a specialist in translation, Dr. Shunnaq wanted to see, how these jokes would be translated from Arabic into English and what are the problems involved. Here are a couple of examples:

The Mahbula spread their beddings on the house courtyard and then go and sleep inside the rooms in order to cheat the mosquitoes!

A Mahbula put two television sets one on top of the other so he can see the thighs of the female news reader!

Why don't the people of Mahbula eat fried chickens? Because they think they are rusty!

Jordanians, just like others enjoy a good joke and laugh at themselves. Mahbula is one example of regional variations as there are jokes about certain areas in the country. Taffleh is one such example. There is a variation to the television joke.

Netanyahu survives vote

Continued from page 1

Israeli peace talks. Mr. Sharon is also demanding an expanded portfolio that would give the office unprecedented powers.

The post would be Sharon's first top security job since he was forced out as defense minister over a 1982 massacre of Palestinians.

"I stated (to Netanyahu) in a very clear fashion that I have to be on this team...that deals with political security issues," Sharon, of Netanyahu's Likud party, told Israeli radio.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister David Levy considered resigning from the cabinet yesterday because of his growing frustration and disappointment with Netanyahu and the government's functioning. Geshet sources said. They added that he finally

Systema's discovery of natural medicine

WHO DOESN'T know the Bedouins or heard of them? These people lead a simple life near water springs in the desert. They live peacefully and adapt to the desert, which reveals its secrets to them.

The Bedouins do not know much about doctors and surgeons. They live far from the environmental pollution, the Ozone Layer Hole and the difficulties of modern life. They have their own customs, traditions, courts, laws and doctors.

They look to the urban people as inferior; they have their own life and their doctors have special knowledge of herbs in

terms of place of growth, way of handling, mixing, extracts and the correct way of taking them. Their life is a pure environment free from city pollution. They eat the fruit they grow and wear clothes they make since their garments are made of camel's skin and sheep wool skillfully spun by their women.

Diseases are rare for them; particularly the modern diseases. They consider medicine tablets as poison and never deal with such things.

They care much for the preservation of the customs of their fathers and forefathers. The

traditional marriage is the only way of marriage acceptable for them.


Their simple and primitive agriculture is unique. They know what to plant, and the times and species of plants. As for their medical herbs, they collect during the blossoming and blooming season of spring and keep around the year according to traditional methods well known for them.

In the light of all this came the start, when Mr. Khames Al Bitar, director of Systema, began touring the bedouin centers and pavilions in the Sinai desert, and other areas of their living. ■

Tropicana

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Irbid Flower Auction

Continued from page 1

opened in the country. The first branch was opened in Zerqa sometime this year, and it is proving to be great success. In fact this is partly why the organizers established the new Irbid location.

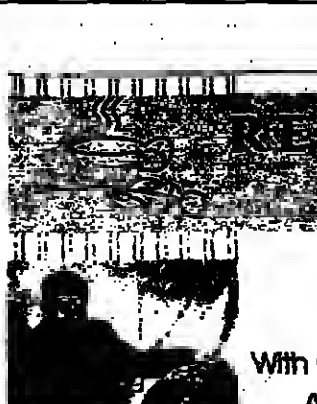
Approximately 30 major florists are using the Auction on a daily basis, and they are very happy from the service it provides. The prices in the Irbid branch are approximately five percent lower than in Amman, and the florists save at least JD 20 a week for every trip they no longer have to make to Amman. "We are very happy with this new flower Auction, and we have encountered no problems so far," says Mr. Margi.

Most of the flowers grown for the Jordan market are pro-

duced by about 75 large nurseries in and around Amman, Mafraq, and the eastern desert. The substantial production of flowers not only meets the needs of Jordan, but are exported to Europe during the winter, and to the Gulf countries all year round.

The largest volume of flowers sold by season is during mid-summer to late fall, with the main summer season starting in July. Unfortunately, all attempts to grow flowers in Irbid for the local market have failed. Mr. Kessab said, "There isn't enough water here, and the water has a high calcium content."

Less hassle, lower prices, and fresher flowers are the keys to the success of the new Irbid Flower Auction. ■



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JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar



Election date set

The date of the next elections for the Lower House has been fixed. After what was thought to be much trepidation, 18 November was set by the government. Deputies, ordinary individuals and political parties have long started on the election trail, and no doubt this summer would be even hotter than we thought.

An angry Planning Minister

For the first time Planning Minister Dr Rima Khalaf spoke her mind. She criticized Israel for its foot dragging on the execution of joint projects between Jordan and Israel. She said "the new Israeli thinking puts a freeze on the projects and does not form any kind of cooperation to build the region." As to the mega project of linking the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, Dr Khalaf was quoted in Al Rai as saying that the Israeli proposal would deny any Jordanian sovereignty over the area. She said that there are those in the Israeli government who are deliberately creating obstacles in front of joint projects, adding that the recent resignation of the Israeli Deputy Minister of Finance was a protest against the aid package that was recently made by the US administration. She also added that Israel does not allow commercial cooperation between Jordan and the Palestinian Authority areas.



Khalaf

Fines by Audit Bureau

The Audit Bureau, which monitors public finances in government ministries and agencies, has issued 1850 violations in 1996. This is according to the bureau's report which will be issued sometime this week. Through its work, it has managed to save the public purse about JD 10 million. The number of violations issued in 1994 and 1995 were 2750 and 1969 respectively.

In for the axe

We are nearly there. It seems that the government is dead serious about one thing: killing off the Ministry of Supply after about 20 years of existence. Well, this is not exactly true. The Ministry will be merged with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and it could be a lot sooner than we think. But everybody is saying what will happen to prices of basic commodities? Will they continue to be monitored by the government or will they be left to the whims of market forces? However, it has been made clear that the government is going to substitute the present Supply coupons for direct payment as from September.

The new government philosophy is to end what it calls the "administrative sluggishness" that is prevailing in the public sector. And in this respect the government wants to merge the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Municipalities to the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Culture to the Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of Higher Education to the Ministry of Education. This might be a good move because it would mean less of that greasy stuff called fat and inevitably less bureaucracy, but that could inevitably mean laying people off. Now, to be fair, the government is trying to stir away from that idea and that is why it is instituting the social security package.

Flights between Kuwait and Jordan

Direct flights between Jordan and Kuwait will start as of the second week of July. Both Royal Jordanian and Kuwait Airways will begin a four weekly flights between Amman and Kuwait City. Air flights between the two countries have been cut off since the last Gulf War, six years ago.

Another woman for Parliament

We have another woman that is fighting the coming election that is due to be held this autumn. No offence intended of course. Ms Aysia Falah Al Abadi is standing for Amman's Fifth district. She says that it's about time that a woman represents its kind in Parliament. Tojan Faisal might get angry at this comment, but Ms Abadi is right, there must be greater representation under the dome. She is presently an employee of the Greater Amman Municipality in Jubha. Just for the record, Islamic Action Front deputy Abdullah Al Akaleh is standing for re-election in the Al Tafleh constituency. Dr Akaleh is a veteran politician. This will be his third re-election.

Trouble at the district

A fight is developing between the Bathists and Communists over the Third electoral district. In fact it could prove the straw that broke the camel's back and may eventually lead to a split in the opposition over the drawing up of a united electoral list to run the coming general election. At the center of the row is a dispute over who should run for the reserved Christian seat in the district. The Communist Party say they want to put up a candidate as they think they can win because of what they claim as a wide constituency of support in that area. This is contradicted by the Arab Baath Socialist Party. Their deputy for the Third District in the Lower House, Khalil Haddadin (Christian seat) says he sees no reason why he should not stand for re-election. He added that his party, however, would be willing to reach an agreement with the other opposition parties on a united list.



Haddadin

Drugs bust

The Anti-Narcotic Dep't. (AND) prevented the ever biggest drugs smuggling operation in the history of the agency. About 47 Kilograms of heroin and opium at a value of JD 6 million were caught in the back of a Mercedes car. Five people, two of them Arabs, were behind the operation. According to AND director Col. Nazeih Al Sharideh. He said the drugs were intended to be transported to neighboring countries but would not specify.

Lord David Steel

'The peace process...is 'brain-dead,' that is, its on a life-support machine'

EDITOR'S NOTE: Lord David Steel, a Liberal politician of a long stature, was recently in Jordan to present a paper titled "Leadership Towards a New World Order" to the first program of the International Leadership Academy. A United Nations University, it was only established in Amman earlier this month. Lord Steel has been a leader of the British Liberal Party for many years and was the architect behind the merger of the party with the Social Democrats in the 1980s, which is now known simply as the Liberal Democrats. David Steel was made a member of the House of Lords recently for his contribution over the years to British politics. He talked to The Star's Marwan Asmar about the reasons for the program and about necessary ways to activate the peace process, which he describes as 'brain-dead.' Excerpts follow:

What would you say about this program? Do you think it will create 'new leaders'?

I don't think it is designed to create new leaders. I think it is designed to give a focus for people who are interested in leadership and I am quite certain that arising out of this initiative there will be a network of alumni from this program which I hope will have some long lasting effect. From the informal discussions I had with them [participants], they certainly seem to be very determined to carry forward the collective experience of these sessions.

What in your opinion



Lord Steel

should this program be all about, the new leaders, it's a big concept...

It is a big concept. I said at the end of my presentation that leadership involves not just reacting to events but having some kind of vision, some kind of plan which helps to shape events and that's a very different concept. Unfortunately, so much of the leadership today is taken up with reacting to events.

In this context how do you see the current stalemate in the peace process?

The peace process, as I described it in the presentation, is 'brain-dead,' that is, its on a life-support machine and somebody needs to find a cure to the peace process to make it really come alive again. I don't see any sign of this. Unfortunately, the Americans are not going to do this and therefore, I think the responsibility should be taken up by the European Union. Unfortunately, not since 1980, has the European Union been at all proactive in the peace process. It tended to follow on behind and leave everything to the Americans or individual initiatives such as the Norwegians at Oslo. But Britain takes over the presidency of the European

Union in January, for six months, and I hope that they might use that period to restart a new initiative.

Europeans do have a goodwill [and a history], but the problem is in leadership. The leadership role has always been a step back...

Exactly, and the difficulty in the European Union is that the presidency changes every six months, and although we have signed up in the Maastricht Treaty, a couple of years ago, to a common foreign and security policy, there is no mechanism for driving that policy forward, there is no political secretariat, so that every initiative lies with the presidency for six months. Six months is not a long enough perspective when you are dealing with an issue like the Middle East peace process, it's far too short. So, where is the leadership to come from. I hope Britain will do something during that six months, but the key to it, seems to me, is to have a political secretariat which is permanent to drive forward the excellent resolutions which the EU has passed in previous years on the peace process, but they have to turn those resolutions into action now.

Are there any problems on that score with the Americans. They have not been keen in getting the Europeans in, so in speak.

The Americans are tied up in such a bind now on the whole process that they should welcome anybody else taking an initiative, and in a sense, the Americans have some justifications for a little bit of exacerbation that the Europeans have not got their act together yet, and have not been ready to pursue an initiative of their own. You are asking me a speculative question. I don't know what the reactions of the Americans would be if Europe really succeeded, but I hope it will be positive.

People & Politics

Heat wave: Taking things to the extreme

This time of the year when things tend to go to the extreme—may be it's the heat. Parents raid exam halls to deliver test answers to their kids, hoping that their efforts will actually help advance their offsprings careers.

Police raid a small Jordan Valley town to execute a court order to tear down houses illegally built on government land. Sixteen policemen and two civilians are injured in the confrontation.

Al Wihdal football club is boycotting the Muntaz Championships to protest the unfair distribution of ticket revenues.

Parliament is in recess, the government is busy with huge public relations efforts abroad, mending bridges with Arab countries in the hope of attracting investments, credits and financial assistance. Political parties are threatening to take the government to court over the Ministry of Interior's decision to audit their annual financial statements. The same parties, namely opposition, are now considering creating a single platform to field candidates under a unified list to contest the next parliamentary elections with the hope of defeating government-backed candidates.

The peace process is clinically dead. Relations with Israel are in a free fall: the US wants to leave the parties to cook in their own juices in the summer heat.

Bleak picture? Not exactly. In spite of the political stalemate, the government seems to be making some headway in its efforts to revitalize the economy. With US aid on its way and more money to be generated from new loans and credit facilities, Jordanians are bracing themselves for indications that the economic slowdown, which everybody is feeling, is about to end.

But in the meantime, the heat spell will take its toll. Exam halls are quiet again, the unfortunate incident in Deir Alla is behind us and political parties, well, are their old selves again. But good news are bound to come: for starters the heat wave is almost over and the weather forecast promises normal summer temperatures. That's one piece of good news that is a cause for celebration.

Washing away the evidence

Anti normalization feelings are high at the University of Jordan. This is at least what one can assume from what a group of Education College students at the UJ did one day after former Israeli premier, Shimon Peres, delivered a lecture at the college's auditorium as part of the International Leadership Program.

According to Al Arab Al Yom, the students washed the steps leading to the auditorium to cleanse it. The students used water and disinfectant to literally wash away any traces of Peres' visit. More than 200 students staged a sit-in called by the students' council against the visit by "Qana Criminal." So much for normalization efforts at grassroots level.



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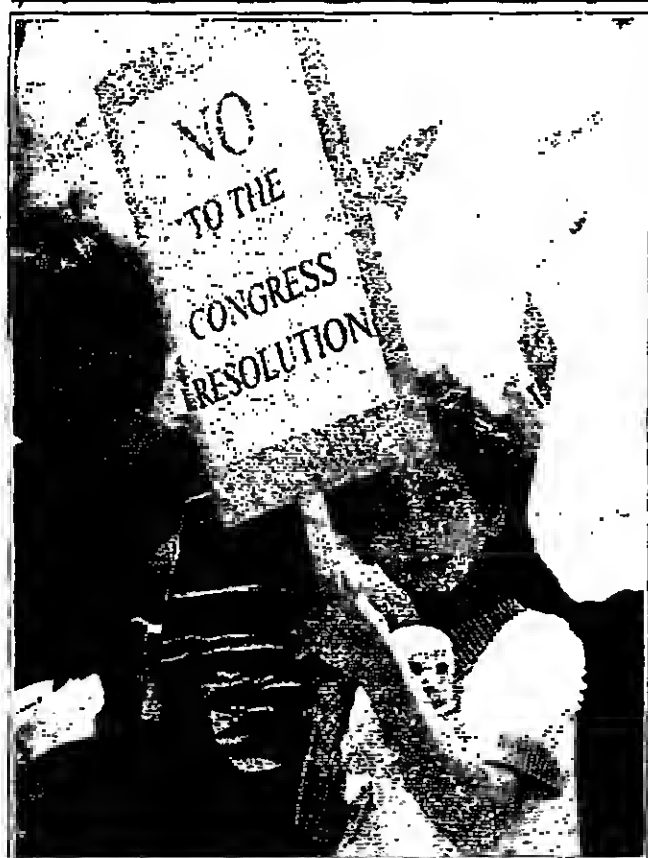
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School girl Farah Khader holds a banner that says no to the Congress Resolution. This was part of a sit-in staged by Jordanian and Palestinian women outside the American Embassy in Amman last Sunday. They were protesting the recent US Congress decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to move the American Embassy from Tel Aviv Jerusalem.

Egyptian court overturns ban on female circumcision

Continued from page 1

ing to the Egyptian Supreme Court.

Many Muslim scholars, however, argue that the practice has no basis in Islamic doctrine, noting that in Egypt it dates to pharaonic times, centuries before the advent of Islam, and is virtually unknown in such conservative Islamic societies as Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Egypt and other developing countries have come under growing international pressure to curb female circumcision, which often is performed on girls as young as 3. Besides being traumatic and potentially dangerous—especially when performed by barbers and other unqualified practitioners—the procedure has been linked to problems in childbirth and sexual relations.

The government promised to take action in 1994, after CNN broadcast footage of a screaming 13-year-old girl undergoing the procedure at the hands of a Cairo barber. But it soon ran into opposition from Gad Haq 'Ali Gad Haq, then Egypt's senior religious figure and the sheik of Cairo's Al Azhar University, who warned that "girls who are not circumcised when

young have a sharp temperament and bad habits."

The health minister at the time, Ali Fatah, responded by banning the procedure in public hospitals, but not private ones. Sallam, his successor, then tried to close that loophole, announcing last July that no licensed medical professional could perform the procedure.

The decree prompted the lawsuit by Badry and Fawzi, who said last year that female circumcision, if done properly, is "a very minor sort of operation" that leaves the clitoris essentially intact. Moreover, he said, the government ban would only have the effect of driving the practice underground, creating unnecessary trauma and health risks for girls.

Human rights activists said Tuesday night that they were disappointed but not surprised. "We knew that the country was not ready for such a decree," said Marie Assad, director of the Female Genital Mutilation Task Force. "We need more education, more research, more mobilizing."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Lurie's NewsCartoon



(Mewer Note: South Korea declared that peace talks may be on the way between east and west.)

Our Say...

Syria and Iraq; foes and friends

THE WARMING up in relations between Baghdad and Damascus is causing concern in Ankara, Tel Aviv and even Washington. The two Arab Baathist regimes have been at odds with each other for decades and all attempts to create reconciliation between the two neighboring countries met dismal failure.

But now the two countries are seriously moving towards political dialogue and economic cooperation. Both countries have mutual enemies and therefore mutual interests. Iraq has been weakened by seven years of UN sanctions that was accompanied by a devastating war against its infrastructure. Its northern borders are insecure, with secessionist Kurdish rebel movements falling under US and Turkish influence. The Israeli invisible hand can be felt in northern Iraq as well.

Syria, on the other hand, remains, technically at least, at war with Israel. Peace talks with Israel have been suspended since the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the election of hard-liner Benjamin Netanyahu. It does not look as if the current Israeli government will reach an agreement with Syria on the future of the occupied Golan Heights. In recent months, Syria's relations with Turkey have reached a crisis level, while the Turkish-Israeli alliance has put the Syrians on alert.

These and other developments have created a need by Iraq and Syria to come closer to each other. They have common enemies and, at least for the time being, they have common interests.

It is natural that Turkey, Israel and the United States will view this sudden warmth between the two Arab capitals as a danger to their interests in the region. The two countries are the only ones left outside the circle of the Middle East peace process—Syria is a reluctant member because it fears Israel's hegemony, while Iraq was never officially invited in.

Together these two Arab countries have a population of over 30 million, run armies with respectable, but not necessarily formidable, conventional capabilities, have important resources such as oil, water and geographic depth and, most importantly for Israel and the United States, can potentially threaten Israel.

One can understand America's anxiety, Israel's fears and Turkey's concern over this sudden closeness between Baghdad and Damascus. The real catastrophe would be for this loose alliance to attract yet another member—Iran.

The irony is that it is Syria and Iraq who have most to fear. Their coming together was initiated by a foolish US policy in the Middle East that is clearly anti-Arab and very much pro-Israel. Their instinct for self-defence was triggered by Turkey's shameless incursions into northern Iraq in violation of international laws and agreements and Ankara's open strategic coordination with Tel Aviv.

Israel has made numerous threats, veiled and open, to Damascus, with the aim of bullying Syria into submitting to a humiliating settlement over the Golan. Iraq, in spite of US assurances, is fearful of a trilateral scheme to partition it and tear away its northern part.

As Arabs we should not yield to attempts to raise our fears from the recent Iraqi-Syrian closeness. Instead we should pay a close look at who our real enemies are.



Members of the Iraqi Workers Union, holding pictures of President Saddam Hussein chant slogans outside the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad against the recent Turkish invasion of North Iraq, last week.

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Letters to the editor: Will be edited for brevity, must contain name and address of sender.

A view from America A puzzle of a democracy that turned sour!

By Carrie Nelle Moye
Star US correspondent

TURKEY IS becoming more and more of a puzzle. It freely elected a political party whose leader, Necmettin Erbakan, became prime minister, in a coalition with another party whose leader, Tansu Ciller, became foreign minister and was destined to become prime minister later in the year as agreed. Fine. This is the proper game within the rules of democracy.

But enter the Turkish military and the puzzle begins. This body claims to be the guarantors of democracy and secularism, but its leaders behave like people involved in a struggle.

Rather than accepting the authority of the elected civilian government, as designated by the constitution, the generals decided to run the government and dictate to both prime minister and parliament.

This is a clear sign that Turkey is not ready to join the European Union despite its efforts, pleading and threatening for the last two decades.

The Turkish generals want to have it all. They wish Europe to believe they are true democrats while continue to oppress any opinion not amenable to their concept of the world.

The Turkish constitution, drafted by scholars and jurists in line with European constitutions, was approved by the generals themselves. Since, in essence, they fathered their constitution, they now feel they can apply or break it at will.

In most developing countries the army is the true power. Despite its Westernization, Turkey is no different. The military is idolized as a cult by many. It draws its halo from the memory of the founder of the republic, Kamal Ataturk, who is revered in Turkey's would-be democracy like Kim Il Sung in North Korea's dictatorship.

Like many Third World countries, Turkey appears incapable of enforcing the rules of the democratic game, especially where the military is concerned. While this is true of some other allies and friends of the West, Turkey is the only one making a pretense of Westernization, Europeanization, and pushing to join the European Union.

Zeln El Din Ben Ali of Tunisia is a military figure turned president, as is Hafez Al Assad of Syria. The difference between these two military presidents and Turkey's generals is that the former are not claiming to be Westernized and are not seeking to change geography.

In actuality, 98 percent of Turkey is in Asia and is

known as Asia Minor, but Turkey insists that it is in Europe. An old Turkish proverb notes, "The crow tried to imitate the singing of the nightingale. It forgot its crowing and did not learn to sing like a nightingale. It lost its voice." Like the crow, Turkey has alienated itself from its neighbors—Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Russia, Armenia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria—but has not been accepted by Europe.

Europeanization was Ataturk's dream. He thought decrees such as forcing citizens to change dress—banishing the fez and replacing it with the French *casquette*—symbolized the essence of Westernization. The military continues to cling to the dream-turned-nightmare and consequently has alienated itself from a majority of Turks, mostly simple country folk with strong adherence to Islam and tradition.

Yet, a majority of the Turks voted for Erbakan's Rafah party, known as somewhat Westernized yet mildly Islamic and still rather Turkish-traditional.

The West condemns Iran and others for forcing women to wear the *chador*, and veils. Who condemns Turkey's gen-

erals for decreeing that women are not allowed to cover their heads in public places? Is this not a dictatorship in reverse?

Who condemns the Turkish generals for closing theological schools to preserve secularism (as they claim)? Was not the standard practice of Stalin? In their blind national chauvinism, the Turkish military is trying to stamp out the cultural identity of a third of its population, the Kurds.

By decree, the Kurdish language is forbidden (shades of France in Algeria). People "caught" speaking Kurdish are punished. Kurds do not want to be culturally Turkomanized. They demand recognition of cultural freedom in democratic pluralism, as do ethnic groups everywhere.

Presently, Turkey is withdrawing from its third offensive in northern Iraq to eradicate Kurdish refugees and revolutionary Turkish Kurds who fled to Iraq to escape Turkish oppression. The US and others have been silent regarding this overt aggression. The West is protecting Kurds against Iraq's Saddam Hussein but allowing Turks to slaughter these same persons, Turkish and Iraqi alike.

The past few months have shown the Turkish military's disrespect—even contempt—for their own constitution and democratic rules. They have behaved in defiance of the elected government.

They have entered into military pacts without government consent, invaded a neighboring country against the established policy, oppressed minorities despite their constitution, and dictated to their own prime minister. June 18, Prime Minister Erbakan resigned. He should have demanded that the generals end their charade and head the government.

Europe has refused Turkish membership into the EU for many reasons, major among them is the very behavior of the generals who claim to be the champions of Europeanization. The United States has remained silent and supportive for short-lived interests.

With the demise of the Soviet Union, the strategic value of Turkey to the West has diminished, and with it the value of the Turkish military. Now the military is attempting to forge a new role, even as it endangers both internal and external stability.

Too afraid of Islam

THE RESIGNATION of Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan stems from a conflict, now bedeviling much of the Muslim world, over how much freedom to grant Islamic expression and Islamic political parties. In Turkey, the secular military pressured Mr Erbakan, who heads an Islamist party, to crack down on displays of Islam, and has now forced his resignation.

Many other nations, including Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt, ban some Islamic parties outright. Muslim nations are right to be wary of groups that might impose dictatorships if they reached power. But such bans can end up creating repressive police states in the name of preventing them. They can also help radicalize Islamic movements that might otherwise play by democratic rules.

Governments can blame themselves for the rise of Islamic parties. In societies intolerant of dissent, the mosque is often the only place where people can speak freely and organize. In Turkey, Egypt and other nations, Islamic movements appeal to non-fundamentalists disgusted with the corruption and inefficiency of traditional parties. Govern-

ments often use bans to eliminate the opposition.

There is reason to ban movements that use terrorism or seek to seize power so as to impose dictatorship. But many do not. The Islamic Action Front in Jordan, for example, competes in elections. Turkey's Islamic party played by democratic rules. It won more than 21 percent of the vote and governed in coalition with a secular party.

There was little danger that Mr Erbakan would make Turkey an Islamic nation, given formidable opposition to that course in Turkish society.

Yet the military, which has staged three coups since 1960, pressed Mr Erbakan to shut down government-sponsored religious schools that have been open for years, and to crack down on religious expression, such as the wearing of head scarves in government offices.

Efforts to suppress Islamic movements are common. In 1995, Egypt arrested the most charismatic leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, a popular, relatively moderate group, that condemns violence. The Tunisian government has arrested thousands of members and sympathizers of Nahdha, an Is-

lamic party that behaved democratically.

The risk of banning moderate Islamic movements and expression is that such steps can end up radicalizing them. Like most political groups, Islamic organizations do not disappear when they are banned. They simply turn to methods other than politics. The cruelest example is Algeria, where the government canceled elections in 1992 rather than allow victory by an alliance of moderate and fundamentalist Islamic groups. The alliance was then outlawed and its leaders jailed. Its radicals turned to terrorism, and the government responded in kind. The ensuing bloodbath has killed 60,000 people.

No government should sit back while terror groups or those promising dictatorship seek to take power. It is not always evident when these dangers exist. It is clear, however, that governments in the Middle East and North Africa have often used this excuse to club the opposition. They should instead compete with Islamic parties by making their own administrations more competent and honest.

The New York Times

Book review

A failure to learn the lessons of history

Prohibition: The 13 Years That Changed America, by Edward Behr. BBC, 256 pp.

Reviewed by Jurek Martin

MUCH OF Ed Behr's long career as a journalist and author has been spent outside his native America. He has reported on Asia, Africa and Europe, especially France, but now, like other expatriates before him, has returned home, in this case to dissect the extraordinary historical phenomenon which made it virtually illegal to consume alcohol in the US from 1920 to 1933.

He draws two broad conclusions from his study. First, as the book's sub-title underlines, Prohibition encouraged the habit of law-breaking, aided and abetted by corruption, to the point that it has become ingrained, even glorified, in the national culture.

Second, America, more than most countries, appears condemned not to learn from the lessons of its own history, including such clear disasters as Prohibition which sought to legislate morality. Although he makes no direct reference to it, protagonists on both sides of today's abortion wars could do worse than ponder his analysis.

His book bears many of the strengths and weaknesses of those produced in association with television series, this one recently aired on the BBC. It is excellent on the vividly anecdotal and personal, but some-

times at the cost of hyperbole and the loss of a little perspective (political corruption, after all, was as refined in 19th century America as it was during Prohibition).

But it is both entertaining and instructive to read again of the half-forgotten life and times of men like George Remus, the infamous Cincinnati bootlegger who murdered his wife but was acquitted on grounds of insanity, and "Big Bill" Thompson, the three-time Chicago mayor who was gangster Al Capone's stooge.

There are good passages, too, on the long lobbying campaign that culminated in the passage of the 18th Amendment, embodied in the Volstead Act. That was the work of an improbable coalition of radical women long exercised by the damage that alcohol could do to families, big industrialists such as Henry Ford and John D Rockefeller keen on a booze-free labour force, and politicians out for the main chance, all artfully coordinated in the crunch by Wayne Wheeler, lobbyist for the Anti-Saloon League.

Timing also played its part. US entry into the first world war put previously influential immigrant German brewers on the defensive. Wheeler urged the federal government to investigate "a number of brewers around the country which are owned in part by alien enemies." With the war over, the ASL demanded that temper-

ance reform must be recognised in the reconstruction programme of the several nations of Europe.

America's external relations were strained by Prohibition, much as they are today by the trade in narcotics. French wine and Scotch whisky producers either smuggled liquor in directly (thus enriching many poor US fishermen) or shipped to Canada for movement across the border. Some foreign diplomats in Washington even dealt in alcohol, though as late as 1929 Sir Esmé Howard, the British ambassador, continued to ban it from official receptions (his staff staged a huge party when he was Prohibition did briefly appear to play public health and other dividends. The death rate from alcoholism was cut by 80 per cent by 1921 from pre-war levels, while alcohol-related crime dropped markedly, leaving prisons under-populated. But poisoning from adulterated liquor soon became a blight, by 1927 causing as many as 50,000 deaths and many more injuries and impairments, while organised crime, reaping fabulous profits, operated with increasing impunity and violence.

Finally, however, Prohibition, which started with loopholes, basically failed because it was unenforceable. By 1925 half a dozen states, including New York, had passed laws banning local police from investigating violations. Federal and state judiciaries,

both the honest and the bought-off, became increasingly reluctant to try offenders. Mabel Willebrandt, for eight years an incorruptible deputy attorney general, lamented on retirement in 1928 that "a large part of my time and energy was devoted to prosecuting prosecutors."

The weakening of the national economy in the wake of the stock market crash of 1929 meant state governments began seriously to miss the liquor tax revenues they had been denied. In 1932 Franklin Roosevelt, who never disguised his fondness for martinis, campaigned on making beer legal again in order to tax it.

In the end, Prohibition subsided in 1933 with more of a whimper than a bang of the 21st amendment repealing the 18th because it seemed irrelevant as public policy focused on the Depression. Even John D Rockefeller, "a teetotaler on principle," recanted, observing in 1932 "drinking has generally increased, the speakeasy has replaced the saloon; a vast army of lawbreakers has been recruited and financed on a colossal scale."

Thus a moral cause begat immoral consequences, many of which live today and flourish, as with narcotics, on a global scale. As Ed Behr reasonably concludes: "Those who know no history condemn themselves to repeat it, either as tragedy or farce."

Financial Times Syndicator

Middle East Report Missed point

IT IS difficult to talk about the Middle East peace process in terms of a balance sheet, or of an accountant method in book-keeping. This is not to say of course, that peoples of the region do not expect the dividends of peace to reach their own societies. Hopes will always remain high.

Nevertheless the balance sheet approach distracts us from the fact that peace is still to pay positive dividends. At the same time, the images on our TV screens, and the highlights in our newspapers carry a uglier reality for the optimists when confrontation, obstinacy, and wasted opportunities seem to carry the day.

Even when any reference is made about the prospects of regional peace, immediately, Mr Netanyahu's name pops up, and the whole issue becomes personalized, when in effect the march of history is on the side of peace despite all its detractors.

It is not the aim of this article to join the chorus of abuse, nor to praise anyone. This is because of the realization of the futility of both methods in achieving the desired objective of pointing out issues that are based on political situations. They, unfortunately, become confused by emotional outbursts from all sides, and because of subjective analysis that lead to glossing over the obvious facts that make politics the art of the possible. Though admittedly, it is very hard under the circumstances to detach oneself from the anger that witnesses the shedding of innocent blood, and the continued stalling of the peace process.

Nevertheless, the window of hope is still open. If one takes a brief leave of absence from the habitual condemnations and subjective feelings. Historically, it was not always the Arabs that have rejected peace and accommodation with Israel, but the religious right-wing in Israeli politics; it was they that rejected accommodation.

When one closely reviews Israeli politics, it becomes apparent that the divisions between left and right, are compounded by the phenomenon of security (Betakhon) conscious Israeli public. Peace and security have become closely intertwined in a dialectal relationship that has become even difficult for the Israeli politicians to find a synthesis for.

Fashionably, in Arab circles, the Israeli Labour Party became the main symbol of peace-seeking political force with the Arabs. Of course this is true, every time we would hold our breath when a no-confidence vote was raised in the previous Israeli Knesset, lest our hopes for peace might be shattered by an Israeli right-wing gain.

Now however, a point that must be raised, though a little overdue, is that for the first time in Israel's history, the right-wing elements, by joining the Netanyahu government, accepts peace as a principle with the Arabs, and a peace at that, built on the division of land between Israel and the Palestinian Arabs.

Peace has become a political fact for the Israeli politicians on both wings of the body politic. There is no vote of no-confidence in the Israeli parliament regarding the question of peace based on the division of territories between the PNA and Israel, but rather, the question now, is the issue of percentages, and the devil is in the details.

It is absolutely important to continue negotiating these details, despite the fact that there are plenty of emotions flying regarding the recent Israeli practices over the issue of settlements and more importantly, the question of the final status negotiations and Jerusalem.

Also, the Israeli politicians, in the name of electorizing and vote capturing, must not keep whipping up the campaign of security and terrorism, when it is apparent that a just peace is the answer for all ills in the region.

Business scene

Foreign Exchange

	Buy	Sell
US \$	0.7100	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
Sfr	0.4801	0.4825
FFf	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
REL	0.3467	0.3483
LIT (100)	0.0414	0.0421

SATURDAY

Trade Volume	151
Stock Volume	473
Traded Stocks	68
Index	50432

Business scene

The Jordan National Bank holds a distinguished rank among Jordanian banks, it is the second if we consider the size of its paid-up capital. According to a report by the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS), the National Bank's strong position encourages investors to buy its shares that are going up sharply at the Amman Financial Market (AFM). The Bank's profits went up after its merger with the Business Bank. This is helping to reduce the costs of operation and is a good opportunity to benefit from incentives provided by the Central Bank to encourage mergers.

The UBS report expects the Bank's revenues to rise over the next three years by 43%. It estimates that its pre-tax profits this year would go up from JD 5,789 million in 1996 to JD 8,676 million. These profits are also expected to hit JD 13,685 million next year and JD 17,299 million by 1999.

The cabinet has officially approved to carry out measures relating to the sale of the assets and liabilities of the Amman Investment Bank (AIB) to the Arab Bank. This was taken on recommendation of the Finance Minister and the governor of the Central Bank of Jordan. The AIB was sold two months ago to the Arab Bank after the former suffered huge losses. The new bank, called the Arab Islamic International Bank, will now run on Islamic banking practices at a capital of JD 40 million. Some of the former AIB employees—120 to 200—will be employed at the new bank. The Central Bank has promised to find jobs for the other employees.

A joint Jordanian-Saudi trade expo was opened last Sunday at the Amman International Motor show. The expo is seen as an important venue that help to acquaint visitors with the latest Jordanian and Saudi products and strengthens trade exchange between the two countries.

It is also a golden opportunity for investors and businessmen to exchange views and expertise and sign contracts for joint ventures to be executed either in Jordan or in Saudi Arabia.

Among the exhibits are herbal products, macaroni, vegetable oils, aluminium industrial products, furniture, air-conditioning units, refrigerators, garments and other foodstuff items.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 25 June

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
Sw	0.4881	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEL	0.3667	0.3685
LIT (100)	0.0419	0.0421

New economic law arouses controversy among private sector

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

TALK OF the private sector over the past week concentrated on the government's draft law on competition and monopolistic practices. It is expected to take effect next month.

While the government says it is crucial to pass this law because of its importance to the economy, the private sector sees no hurry. Businessmen argue that the adoption of this law should go hand in hand with another one to protect the national economy. They stress these draft laws should wait to be discussed by the Lower House.

They are afraid that these laws would be pushed through without careful study as happened in the recently passed companies and securities law.

Businessmen themselves say that they were not given enough time.

An open dialogue was held last week at the Amman Chamber of Industry, between government officials headed by Ministry of Trade and Industry's Secretary General Dr Mohammed Al-Halajia and other senior officials, and representatives of the Amman Chamber of Industry, the Federation of Jordanian Trade Chambers and other activities in the private sector.

In what was seen as a constructive discussion, participants dealt with the government's proposals concerning the draft law on competition and monopolistic practices and discussed some adjustments by the private sector.

Dr Al-Halajia said "the government will take the view of the private sector into consideration when the law is finally formed." He pointed out that this draft is not final, and we can negotiate and discuss these laws before they are ready to be implemented.

Al-Halajia added that the speeding of this law comes within the context of the government's philosophy to resume endorsing the series of economic legislations to prepare the country for membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), and meet the requirements of the European partnership agreement.

However, the Deputy Chairman of the Amman Chamber of

Industry, Wasif Azar said that "this law in such a form is not adequate and does not meet the aspirations of our national economy."

It kills competition and punishes competitive practices in price and technological development, Azar said.

As competition does exist among industrial producers and manufacturers in Jordan, this law should only seek to prohibit monopoly and prevent any actions by industrialists to abuse consumers.

This is also the view of Ali Al-Dajani an expert in Amman Chamber of Industry. "Our national economy is still at its beginnings, we are a small emerging market that has no big companies, if there are big companies they are very few and specialized in certain industrial fields."

Al-Dajani stresses that competition must be encouraged to improve productivity and achieve self-sufficiency. "This will enable us to create big institutions that can be strong enough to compete with global

blocks and industrial activities."

Al-Dajani says that the new industries have been introduced to improve quality, rather than killing or abolishing already existing ones. For instance, the traditional soap industry has faded when the new detergents industry started. This is not because of lower price or to replace such industry, but simply because the latter developed the production and improved the quality of produce.

This means that the strong, both in quality and production, remains in the market, while the weak quickly vanishes, especially amidst global challenges and the need to cope with worldwide requirements and competitiveness in a free market economy.

However, Al-Dajani assures that the Chamber of Industry is not against issuing a law or prohibiting monopoly, but he stresses that the penalties stipulated in the draft law proposed by the Ministry of Industry and Trade are too much and very heavy.

During last Saturday meeting, a committee was formed from the private sector to prepare proposals to the draft law and submit them to the Ministry for final discussion.

Dr Tayseer Abdul Jabbar, from the Businessmen Association told *The Star* that we support the introduction of this law that will encourage competition and curtail monopolistic actions. However, we feel that it should be associated with another law or protection of national economy to protect our industries from possible dumping practices." Dr Abdul Jabbar put forward. His other proposals are as follows:

■ There are articles that are heavily subjective and judgemental that relate to monopolistic practices. These should be clearly defined in order to avoid any misinterpretation of the law. "We are against the institutional set up which is proposed by the draft law, namely the creation of a new department at the Ministry of Industry and Trade which will be entrusted with

implementation."

■ I have proposed a new set up that is the creation of a domestic trade commission to be in charge of implementing the draft law. This commission will include the private sector in order to eliminate any possible abuse of the competition law.

■ The fines included in the law are extremely high and "we asked to lower them and adjust the fine percentage to not on all sales but according to the net profit of the company," Abdel Jabbar said.

Waleed Al-Khatib, the director of the Amman Chamber of Industry says although we see no pressing need to issue such a law, we respect the government's view.

"The Competition and Prohibiting Monopolistic Practices Law", if endorsed will become effective within two months from the day it is published in the *Official Gazette*.

All evidence show that by next month, this law will be in effect. ■

Tourism promises great job opportunities, stresses tourism council

LEADERS OF the world's main industrialised nations attending the Summit of the Eight (formerly the G7) meeting in Denver, Colorado on 20-22 June, have been urged to include Travel and Tourism in their action to create jobs.

In an open letter to the Heads of Government of the USA, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan and the Russian Federation, as well as the President of the European Commission, the 88 Chief Executive Officers Members of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC) point out that Travel and Tourism can generate, directly and indirectly, four million jobs in the G7 nations during the next decade, a further six million in Central and Eastern Europe and two million in the European Union.

"The special WTTTC report, 'Summit of the Eight-Travel & Tourism - Creating Jobs', identifies the catalytic 'flow-through effect' of Travel and

Tourism demand right across the economy particularly in sectors such as construction, telecommunications, financial services, manufacturing and retail, and calls for the industry to be taken into account in job-creation strategies," says WTTTC President Geoffrey Lipman.

The WTTTC report urges the Summit of the Eight leaders to recognise the value of the full range of jobs which flow from Travel & Tourism demand, particularly, entry-level jobs and work experience for the young, students, women and minorities, as well as jobs in regions, city centres and rural areas undergoing structural change.

"The 'Summit of the Eight-Travel & Tourism-Creating Jobs' report, specially prepared by WTTTC for the G7+1 Summit, shows that Travel and Tourism in the G7 nations will generate an estimated 34.1 million jobs in 1997, across a

broad spectrum of economic activities. The industry is expected to account for 10.9 percent of the workforce, providing one in every 9.2 jobs and \$2.3 trillion of gross output.

Over the next 10 years, the G7 countries are expected to increase their Travel and Tourism-generated employment by some 4.3 million jobs, or 12.8 percent growth, with gross output reaching \$3.9 trillion.

The report underscores the conclusions reached by public and private sector Travel and Tourism policymakers in the Vilamoura Declaration, calling for action in four key areas to adopt the WTTTC's Millennium Vision—a proposal for intensified public/private sector co-operation to make Travel and Tourism a strategic economic development and employment priority and eliminate barriers to growth—as the cornerstone of policy making activities.

Integrate Travel and Tourism into strategies to combat unemployment.

Reduce rigid practices in labour markets to encourage staff mobility, productivity and innovation in a progressive employment environment, with emphasis on a flexible market economy, avoiding protectionist regulation.

Invest in training and education to improve skills and service quality, encouraging public/private sector partnerships.

Job creation is high on the agenda for a number of the world leaders attending the Summit of the Eight. Both President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Tony Blair, for example, have made clear statements on the need to increase employment. This new report demonstrates how Travel & Tourism can do exactly that, concluded Lipman. ■

Korean products expo promises success

AMMAN (Star)—A Korean Products Exhibition will be held at the Amman International Motor Show on Airport Road next month. Opening on Tuesday 1 July under the patronage of HRH Prince Abdullah Bin Al Hussein, the show continues till 7 July.

This is the fifth Korean Products Show to be held in Jordan. Organized by the Korea Trade Center in Amman, the expo which began in 1993 provides an excellent opportunity to the Jordanian public to experience the very best in Korean products.

Sung-Kwan Oh, director of the Korea Trade Center, hopes the Korea Trade Show will provide, "a good window of opportunity to introduce Korean products and advanced technology to the Jordanian people." Korean products are well respected by many consumers in the country for their quality and reasonable prices.

Over the past decade Korean-Jordanian economic and trade relations increased tremendously. Recently, however, trade relations have weakened. Mr Oh hopes the expo will again "jump-start trade relations between Jordan and Korea once again."

The 1996 trade figures between the two countries, indicate that Korean exports to Jordan increased by 7.7 percent in 1996 to reach \$152 million over 1995, while Jordan exports to Korea scored a 10.9% increase to reach \$27 million compared to 1995.

The Korean Products Show is an important

event in Jordan, bringing together many companies, trading houses, dealers, business people, and the general public.

There will be 17 Jordanian companies representing 19 Korean companies, and five Korean companies participating directly from Korea.

The following are a few of the local participants: Unity Trading Co. (agent of Hyundai Motors), Nicola Abu-Khader & Sons Co. (agent of Roadstone Tires), Jordanian Asian Trading Equipments (agent of Asia Motors), and Computhink & Electronics Co.

The Korean participants are Song Duk Ga Up General Co. (automobile filters, cosmetics), United Korea Co. (imitation jewelry), Mil Yang Co. (Korean ornaments), Peniel Corporation (optical frames, sunglasses), and Dae Mang Mulsan Co. (Neckties).

Among the items in the exhibition are automobile vehicles, tires, automobile accessories, home appliances, telecommunications, hotel supplies, kitchenware, socks, ties, medical items, computer accessories, optical frames, sunglasses, imitation jewelry, and cosmetics.

The expo is sponsored by the Inter-Continental Hotel, Korean Air, Jordanian-Korean Friendship Association, Jordanian Trading Group Co., and Freddy for Music. For more information contact the Korea Trade Center at tel: 684253-684004; fax: 684254. ■

Anti-Drug Day message by UN Secretary-General
Drug is a 'threat to basic human security'

NEW YORK, (UN Information Service)—Following is the text of a message from Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the occasion of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (26 June):

There is now no part of the world that, sadly, is not touched by the scourge of drug abuse: indeed, drug abuse is a growing problem almost everywhere. And one of the most grim aspects of this global problem is that it affects most those who are most vulnerable—young people.

My appeal this year is for united action, everywhere, at national and local level and down to the individual family, to attack this threat to human life and basic human security.

It is alarming that individuals are beginning to experiment with drugs at ever younger ages. New drugs are growing in popularity, because young people in many societies wrongly imagine them to be safer than more traditional drugs like heroin and cocaine. That is why we must make it absolutely clear that any misuse of drugs carries high risk.

The United Nations is working hard to combat the escalating problem of drug abuse. Governments are working through the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and other United Nations agencies to halt the manufacture of illicit drugs, to prevent smuggling across borders, and to tackle all the other complex problems drug abuse entails. Indeed, in June next year, a Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly will meet to take stock of progress at the international level and to agree on future courses of action.

But as in medicine itself, prevention is better than cure. Our first priority must be to reduce the exposure of young people to drug abuse. In doing so, we must all work together. Our communities have a leading role to play.

My message today is therefore an appeal to all communities to act now—whether or not you have drug abuse problems

in your midst. It is in communities and their institutions that action to prevent drug abuse should be rooted.

Build on what is positive, offer challenges, because negative messages are unlikely to have long-term impact. Simple, honest facts should be presented. Special attention needs to be given to the especially vulnerable—migrants, refugees—whose lives have been disrupted, and to young people in situations where strong role models are absent.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to those schools, parents, NGOs, businesses and other community groups which are already doing outstanding work in drug abuse prevention. To those who are still sitting on the sidelines I would say: "Do not shirk your responsibilities. Do not stand by while others do the work."

The problems are enormous, but I am convinced that individuals, communities and governments, acting together, can make a difference.

Message of the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), Giorgio Giacomelli, on the occasion of the International Day

Business Chronicle

Consumers should have a decisive role in the market

AFTER SLIGHTLY less than two decades, the Ministry of Supply is being abolished.

When it was established in 1979, its main task was to secure the strategic needs of consumers. The Ministry sought to provide staple items such as rice, sugar, wheat and powdered milk at subsidized prices.

The aim behind such a step was to protect consumers from the monopoly of goods by merchants and put a ceiling on the prices of the basic needs of inhabitants with low income.

However, with time, the role of the Ministry was expanded, and its task enlarged to include pricing other items. According to officials, the Supply Ministry has the right to interfere in pricing all commodities. They see this as necessary to protect consumers.

But today, it is argued that this interference has gone too far with the ministry poking its nose in almost every item, things which they could just as easily do without. Such items include salmon, can juice, tomato paste, etc. The task of the Ministry has somewhat diverged from its original mission.

During the last Gulf Crisis of 1990/91, and after the flow of returns into Jordan, the Ministry found itself in an unenviable position. It became responsible for securing all basic needs for all the new comers who returned to Jordan because of the crisis and eventually war.

Coupons were introduced to guarantee that the public received foodstuffs at a reasonable price. The Ministry decided to introduce the coupon system for rice, sugar and powdered milk at subsidized prices. Today however, and after about six years, the Ministry is making another U-turn. It is now going to cancel these coupons for an annual cash subsidy.

The first step along this road came last August when the government decided to lift the subsidy on wheat and bread. Every person now gets JD 15 in cash for bread annually. By next September however, the cash subsidy will increase further by JD 9 per capita replacing the coupon system.

And as a result people who now have coupons should hand them in by next September in return for cash compensation. The mechanism for this measure will be instituted by July.

People are worried. They are not hesitating in expressing their fears and say that the burden on their shoulders will more than double. They may even lose out and get lost amidst the government's philosophy to stop subsidy and liberalize prices.

Since last April consumers have continued to be victims of the fluctuation of fruits and vegetables prices which continue to rise despite the summer.

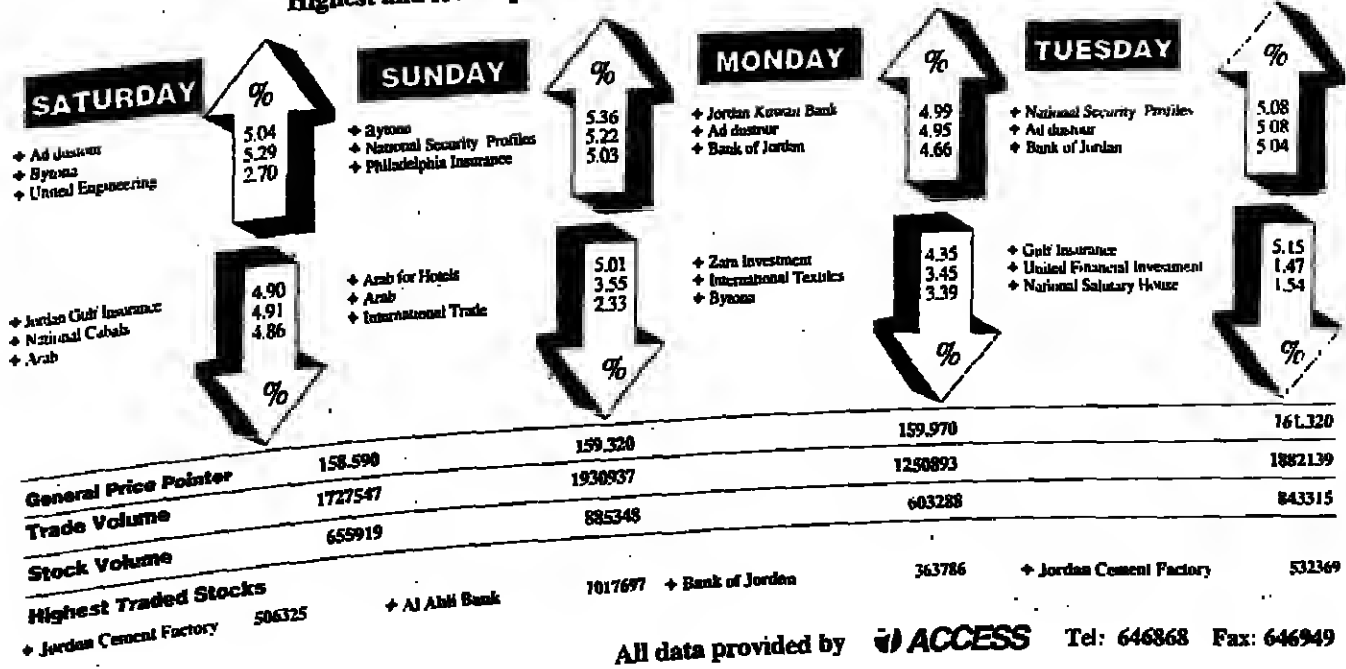
The sharp increase in prices is argued by some to be as a result of a wrong timing of the fluctuation philosophy. They say that such a decision should have been taken in better conditions (that is not within a difficult weather conditions when farmers lost many of their crops due to the frost that prevailed last winter).

As it is the usual procedure that supply and demand regulate the market, then priority is to be given to the consumer's role. He should be able to freely select his commodity and rationalize his consumption.

However, with the move towards price liberalization and the removal of the Ministry of Supply, more and more people are calling for the creation for a supervisory agency to monitor prices and a active Consumer Protection Society, at least one with more teeth. ■

WATCH 27-24 June

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

Jordan Petroleum Refinery Co. Ltd Amman Jordan
Re-tender invitation for bidding No. 20/97
Valves for LPG Cylinders

Jordan Petroleum Refinery Co. Ltd, announces re-tender invitation No. 20/97 for the supply of valves for LPG Cylinders.

Companies who wish to participate in the above tender are invited to obtain tender documents before 12.30 hrs from the company's head office at the 1st circle - Jabal Amman, Against a non-refundable J.D 40.- per set.

Previous participants can obtain a set of tender documents free of charge. A bid bond equals 5% of the offer total amount valid for 120 days should be submitted with the offers.

Commercial and technical offers should be submitted in separate sealed envelopes.

Offers must be submitted at company's head office not later than 12.00 hrs of Sunday 13.7.1997



Darwish to attend Jerash Festival

THE FAMOUS Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish will participate in the Jerash Festival for Art and Culture that will start on 24 July. Mr Darwish will kick off the "parallel poetry festival" in the North Theater in Jerash. Afterwards the poetry readings will be held in Amman at the Shoman Foundation, and will continue till 9 August. ■



Arab art lightens up the Darat

By Anca de Maio
Special to The Star

From 17 June to 24 July, Darat Al Funun offered art lovers a rich and varied collection of paintings by contemporary Arab artists from all over the world. As part of its declared mission to foster a cultural dialogue amongst Arab artists, the twice yearly collection covers the whole geography of the Arab world and the diaspora. The objective is to provide the public with a comprehensive palette of generation movements, personal positions and artistic styles.

Fifty-four artists from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria and Tunisia, residing in their native countries or abroad, participated in the exhibition. Many of them already displayed their art at Darat Al Funun since its establishment in 1993. Thanks to Mrs Suha Shoman's remarkable effort to identify, contact and select prominent talents, Arab artists in European countries, Canada and the United States, and even in Asia have the opportunity to re-assert their belonging to their original culture and to the Arab art movement.

At a bird's eye view, the taste for the abstract is the prevailing characteristic of the collection. "The development of the Arab art movement follows the general orientation to the abstract of

global art," said Mr Adnan Sharif, deputy director of Darat al Funun. "Despite this general impression, the variety of subjects, techniques and media illustrated in this exhibition ranges from figurative to abstract art, from naive to sophisticated expressions, from symbolic to caricatured representations," he underlined. "With the exception of sculpture, we have tried to bring together various painting and graphic art techniques as employed by artists of different generations and schools," he added.

Art pieces by senior artists like Iraqi painter and philosopher Shaker Hassan Al Said or Egyptian sculptor and painter Adam Henna dialogue with pictures by young artists like Jordanian Muhammad Nasrallah and Iraqi Mahmud Al Obeidi, on such topics as 'one-dimension art', geometric abstraction on papyrus, obsessive symbols and perspective effects. Tunisian artist Adderrazak Sahli plays childishly with blue-and-orange shapes on a gray background just as his Bohemian compatriot Gonider Triki covers big brown or green surfaces with tiny primitive figurative motifs. Emine El Bacha, painter and teacher of art at the Beirut University, participates in the exhibition with a picture composed on the same principle of repetition, but the pattern does not evoke the African spirit of the former two.

Tunisian, Moroccan, Algerian and Sudanese

artists share some North African characteristics," comments Mr Sharif. The details fuse into the whole when Rafik Al Kamel imagines the universe as an explosion of small particles (pink dots), and the minute figuration becomes abstraction in Muhammad Kacimi's mixed media paintings or in Farid Belkahlia's natural pigment paintings on leather.

The numerous group of participating Iraqi artists—Ismael Fatah, Himat Mohammed Ali, Nadim Mubsin, Kareem Rasan Mansour, Saadi Al Kaabi, Mohammed Mohieddin, Rafa Nassiri, Salem Al Dabbagh—is compact in vision and approach. Either they exploit old Iraqi symbols and calligraphy according to the art theory of 'vertical' one-dimension painting, or they highlight the human body in a sculptural manner.

Many Palestinian artists in the diaspora, such as Vladimir Tamar (Japan), Samia Halaby (United States), Nasser Soumi (France), Kamal Boullata (United States), Laila Shawa (Great Britain), Yasser Dweik (Great Britain), as well as artists from Jerusalem—Jumana Al Hussein, Tayseer Barakat, etc. express more or less manifestly their national identity. Suleiman Mansour uses mud, straw, ropes and natural pigments from Palestine. Nasser Soumi paints the Mediterranean Sea in a collage dedicated to his native Jaffa, while Khalil Rabah overlaps in his collages patches of Palestinian embroidery, photos and newspaper cuts.

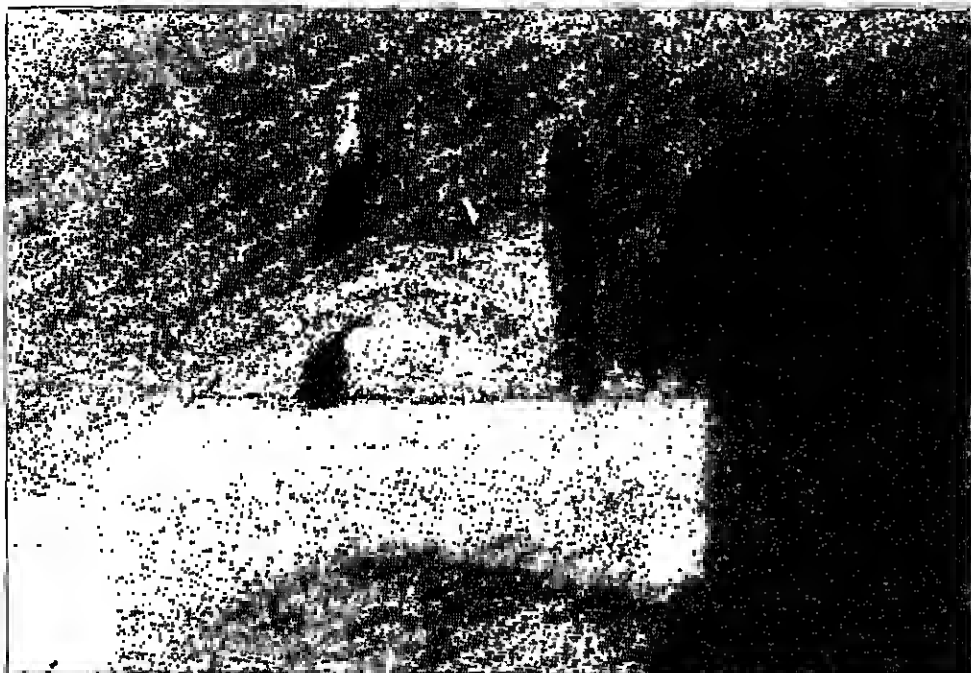
As for the Jordanian participants, non-figurative paintings by Abdoul Raouf Shammoun, Ghada Dabdabeh, Adnan Sharif, Nawal Abdullah, Khaled Khreis, Rula Shukairy, Hind Nasser, Dodi Tabbaa, and figurative pictures by Ahmad Nawash (naive caricature), Adnan Yahya (caricature) Nabila Hilmi



(abstract landscape), Muhammad Nasrallah (symbolic landscape), Fouad Mimi (urban landscape), Ammar Khammash (Amman landscape), Riham Bishara Ghassbi (naive landscape) are present in the collection.

Paintings by famous Syrian artists Marwan Kassab Bachi (Germany) and Ziad Dalloul (France), Sudanese artists Rashid Diab (Spain) and Muhammad Omar Khalil (US) as well as by Lebanese painters Ghada Jamal (US), Afaf Zurieg (US) and Jordanian Nabil Shehadeh (Switzerland) are available too.

A non-profit organization, Darat Al Funun facilitates the acquisition of these works by the public, without taking any commission for the works sold. After the Summer Festival '97, a new collection by contemporary Arab artists will be opened at the Darat in October, announced Mr Sharif. ■



Increasing environmental awareness through media

HUMANS HAVE long started to exploit nature. For many centuries, Planet Earth was able to tolerate the growing environmental exploitation. But with the vast population increase and the industrial revolution that accompanied it, the world only began to realize the dimensions of this problem in the last few years.

International Organizations held many conferences and seminars and signed many international conventions to protect the environment. However all this is futile without supplementing these efforts with greater awareness through the media, education, etc.

The role of the media in environmental awareness promotion cannot be ignored since it affects all classes of society, whether they are intellectuals, decision-makers, law-makers, industrialists, and so on.

For the media to be effective, it must present the issue in a convincing and interesting way by

simplifying its scientific content. What is actually needed here, is a new generation of highly trained environmental media people.

Thus, the idea of establishing the Mediterranean Ecological Media Network was born. As the countries around the Mediterranean are remarkable for being geographically interrelated, the environmental problems are similar. Therefore, preventing environmental degradation in the Mediterranean can only be achieved in the long term by the efforts of governmental and non-governmental institutions and the help of the regional and the international media.

The Network idea came up in 1995, during the meeting held in Geneva for the environmental media people of the Mediterranean basin countries under the supervision and support of the Environmental Technical Aid Programme for the Mediterranean Basin.

It included Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt and Morocco. The contributors for the Programme are the International Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union and the European Investment Bank.

This country, through the Jordan Environment Society was chosen as headquarters of the Network.

In order to take up the work and the activities of the Network, a founding members meeting will be held in Amman on 27 June to discuss launching the by-laws, the future plan and elect the Network Board (NB). This is followed by a training workshop for the environmental media people during 28 June, during which participants will be informed about the many international and regional environmental issues, and the about the role of the media in this matter, as well as the environmental media projects. Other countries participating in the meeting are from Syria, Turkey, Slovenia, Croatia, Cyprus, Albania.

Some of the Network objectives are to emphasize communications among the media in the region, to improve the environmental awareness of the reporters and technicians, to train media people on environmental administration and finally to decrease the destructive effect on the Mediterranean by increasing the members capacity for executing different environmental activities. ■

Le Teint Ricci Cosmetic Products are now in town

AT ONE of the Abu Shakra's showrooms on Garden Street, Le Teint Ricci cosmetic product from Nina Ricci was introduced to the Jordanian market. The product was introduced by the manager of the Abu Shakra Trading Agency Rami Abu Shakra.

In a press statement, Nina Ricci's Regional Director Patrick Bouchard said ever since its foundation in 1932, Nina Ricci has been devoted to the beauty in women, beauty that presents a complete picture.

Therefore, it was only natural that Nina Ricci should create a beauty line: "Le Teint Ricci". Speaking about the features of Le Teint Ricci cosmetics, Mr Bouchard said Nina Ricci has created a musical score of colour harmonies for every woman to design her own individual style of beauty and the freedom to create her own most attractive look.

Attentive to women's needs and determined to satisfy them, Le Teint Ricci products have been rigorously tested to ensure maximum safety in application.



The products containing Catalyseur De Beaucie, naturally treat and protect the skin, by helping the complexion recover its full radiance through a smoother skin texture, optimum light reflection and long lasting self protection. Le Teint Ricci is a three-step approach include a cleansing gel and milk, a cleansing bar and a beauty mask guiding a woman through her daily

beauty care ritual in sensuously attractive shapes and colour, in order to achieve her loveliest complexion.

Le Teint Ricci has the same smell of Nina Ricci perfumes and same baking.

Mr Bouchard said Le Teint Ricci introduced in 1992 in Europe then in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, followed by Lebanon and now in Jordan.

The Penguin!

A bird which tries to fly but never more it adores its two opposite colours

It walks braggingly along the shore. Throbbing gravels, ditching Sand, Emperor!

Stretching its wings and also its tail Up and down jumps, runs and tries to fly In vain his efforts outcome and in fall! Is it hard always to sell and to buy Getting to failure and tracking the trail!

To left and right he looks, ... breathes despair "It's a hard, hard life, he said to himself "How to fly and to go to everywhere?"

To mount unknown and backs of the air? Doors of life are narrow to get through. Is it enough to 'beg will of feelings? To ride on danger, trespassing the bow.

The answer was his, "No, it's hard to know" Dreams to fly through, in air and up. The blue skies, he runs and has to jump His beats of wind're short as his short wings And says "I'll work as such work of pump"

Is air to be pumped as hopes in mind All gates're closed to no escape to find Because such life of not many options is not ours, its the life of mankind Its hard to live and kill and be such kind

It calls on God, appeals the penguin It dreams to fly as man once's done To fly and see the seas of the world To stable wings and wander horizon To left and right it looks, exhales the pain Enjoy then resonance of echo from The flute of sea in every eve an morn

It looks around and sees heap of rocks It calls its corpse by mouth and feet it knocks "Awake... H!.. Rock I call yo' many times. Remove the violent death off your eye-lids. Vibrate somehow not as much as peacocks! I try to run after man; read his books. Seconds are breaths of life and wings of clocks?

Fawzi Shalabi
Wadi Seer college



Little tots learning to play the piano already. Proud parents Khaleel and Jumana Darwazah have just celebrated the first birthday of their son, little Nizar. Any happy returns for the coming year.

THE FAR SIDE

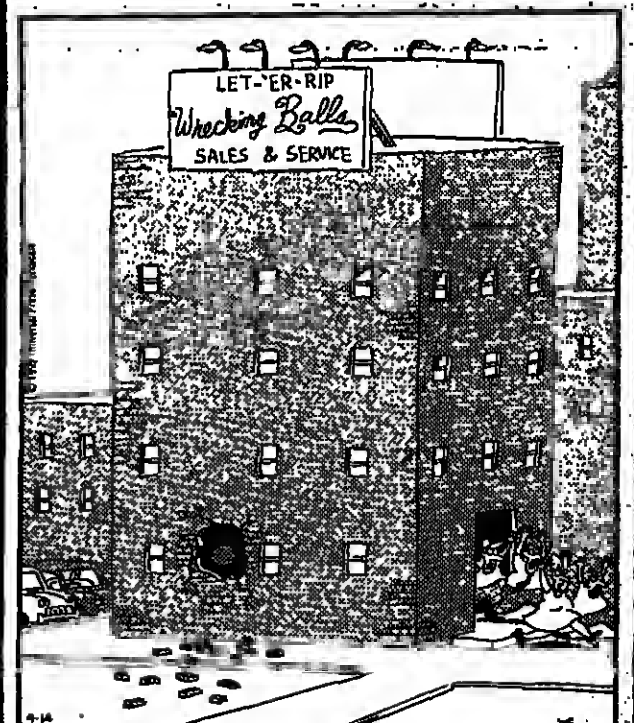
By GARY LARSON



In the rodent family, the beaver is king of the busy signal.



"For crying out loud! Look at this place! ... Well, this is one little Satanic ritual that's coming to an end!"



Up until that moment, Raymond had been a rather shy employee with a nervous twitch. Up until that moment.

SLAPSTIX

Committee: a group of the unfit appointed by the unwilling to do the unnecessary.

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AGENDA

Exhibitions
■ "The Contemporary Arab Artists Exhibition" showing the works of more than 60 artists from the Arab world, continues at Darat al Funun till 24 July.
■ Artworks by nine contemporary Iraqi artists, entitled "Ecology & Environment in the Iraqi Art", at the Royal Society of Fine Arts, runs till 12 July.
■ Spring Exhibition of Plastic Art '97 at Greater Amman Municipality runs till 30 June.
■ Artists' book exhibition entitled "One of a Kind" continues at the American Centre till 30 June.
■ Photo exhibition of Hong Kong, sponsored by the Chinese Embassy, at the Royal Cultural Center, runs till 19 June.
Thursday 26 June at 6:30 pm.
■ All était une fois Beyrouth. Thursday 26 June at 8:30 pm.
■ A travers elles. Ombres. Friday 27 June at 7:30 pm.
■ Halfa, Friday 27 June at 8:30 pm.
■ Réflexions dans le temps. L'essai 10.452. Mashi. Saturday 28 June at 7:30 pm.
■ La nuit, Saturday 28 June at 8:30 pm.
■ Bâtir sur des vagues. Si le poule un jour. Sunday 29 June at 7:30 pm.
■ Bye-bye Sunday 29 June at 8:30 pm.
■ La lettre de Nabil. Les mesures de la distance. Monday 30 June at 7:30 pm.
■ Essai, Monday 30 June at 8:30 pm.
■ Entre nous deux. Beyrouth, Rencontre, Tuesday 1 July at 6:30 pm.
■ Machah, Tuesday 1 July at 8:30 pm.
All films will be shown at The Royal Cutler Center.

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

8:30-Holy Koran
8:45-French Programs
9:00-Gillette World Sports
Special
9:30-Innovations
9:40-Tilt
9:50-Blue Heaven
10:00-French Programs
10:10-French News
10:30-New Headlines
10:45-Hangin' with Mr. Cooper
11:00-Magazine Zero One
11:30-From
11:40-Time Trek
11:50-Football Match
12:15-Future Film News
12:30-1:00

SUNDAY

8:30-Holy Koran
8:45-French Programs
9:00-America's Funniest People
9:10-Energy Express
9:15-American Chart
9:30
9:40-French Programs
9:50-News in French
10:00-New Headlines
10:15-Fresh Prince of Bel Air
10:30-Cosmo Cinema
10:40-The Churchills
10:50-Renegade
11:00-News at Ten
11:30-Uni West Weekly
11:45-News
11:55-Football Match
12:30-1:00

MONDAY

8:30-Holy Koran

CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1. Roman
2. Name
3. Be the equal of
4. ...Magnum
10. Represent
15. Start shape
16. By what means
17. Underwear
18. First drink
20. Prime no. eg.
21. Put on guard
22. Defenses
23. Command
24. Start sense
25. Play
26. Hit review
27. Sarcasm
28. Burial's tool
29. Earn
30. Catch
31. Shady
32. Roman
33. Name
34. Defenses
35. Command
36. Start sense
37. Play
38. Hit review
39. Sarcasm
40. Burial's tool
41. Earn
42. Catch
43. Shady
44. Roman
45. Name
46. Defenses
47. Command
48. Start sense
49. Play
50. Hit review
51. Sarcasm
52. Burial's tool
53. Earn
54. Catch
55. Shady
56. Roman
57. Name
58. Defenses
59. Command
60. Start sense
61. Play
62. Hit review
63. Sarcasm
64. Burial's tool
65. Earn
66. Catch
67. Shady
68. Roman
69. Name
70. Defenses



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The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV from 28 June - 4 July

Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149): *Fierce Creatures*
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149): *Gone With The Wind*
- Plaza (Tel: 699238): *Maximum Risk*
- Concord I (Tel: 677420): *Jerry Maguire*
- Concord II (Tel: 677420): *Spacejam*

Highlight of the week at the Pleasure Dome

● *First First love, first kiss, first car...it's all part of the BOOK OF LOVE*

Who wrote the book of love? Not Jack Twiller (Chris Young), whose hilarious efforts to impress the prettiest girl in the school lead to disaster. Whether throwing wild parties, imitating James Dean, or "streaking" through the neighbourhood with his outrageous friends, Jack will do whatever it takes to win the illusive girl of his dreams. But in his obsession for the prom queen, he overlooks the one girl who really appreciates his unique charm. Boasting a classic rock-and-roll soundtrack and an irresistible young cast, *BOOK OF LOVE* is a comic chapter in the life of a hormone-stricken teen who suffers all the hilarious humiliations of adolescence, but finally finds that growing up isn't all that bad!



- ### ENGLISH PROGRAMS
- #### SATURDAY
- 3:30—Holy Koran
 - 4:30—French Programs
 - 6:00—Gillette World Sport Special
 - 7:30—Innovation
 - 8:30—Tilt
 - 9:15—Blue Heelers
 - 10:00—French Programs
 - 11:00—French News
 - 12:00—News Headlines
 - 1:15—Hangin' with Mr. Cooper
 - 2:00—Magazine Zero One
 - 3:00—Prism
 - 4:10—Time Trax
 - 10:00—Football Match
 - 11:15—Feature Film: *She Led Two Lives*
- #### SUNDAY
- 3:30—Holy Koran
 - 4:30—French Programs
 - 6:00—America's Funniest People
 - 7:30—Energy Express
 - 8:30—American Chart Show
 - 9:10—French Programs
 - 10:00—News in French
 - 11:00—News Headlines
 - 12:00—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
 - 1:00—Cinema, Cinema
 - 2:30—The Churchills
 - 3:10—Renegade
 - 4:00—News at Ten
 - 5:00—One West Waikiki
 - 6:15—Sisters
 - 7:15—Football Match (Final America Cup)
- #### MONDAY
- 3:30—Holy Koran



- ### AMERICAN CHART SHOW, Sunday at 5:15 pm
- 3:40—Spirou
 - 4:05—Neighbors
 - 4:30—In the Wild
 - 5:00—Tilt
 - 5:30—Blue Heelers
 - 6:10—French Programs
 - 7:00—French News
 - 7:30—News Headlines
 - 8:00—Murphy Brown
 - 8:30—Discover Magazine (Doc.)
 - 9:10—Murder She Wrote
 - 9:30—Highlander
 - 10:00—News at Ten
 - 10:30—The Write Verdict
 - 11:15—Homicide
- #### TUESDAY
- 3:30—Holy Koran
 - 4:30—Football Match
 - 5:00—Square One
 - 5:10—The Album Show
- #### WEDNESDAY
- 3:30—Holy Koran
 - 4:30—Football Match
 - 5:30—Bordertown
 - 6:00—French Programs
 - 7:00—French News
 - 7:30—News Headlines
 - 8:00—Grace Under Fire (Comedy)
 - 8:10—Soldier's Diary
- #### THURSDAY
- 3:30—Holy Koran
 - 4:30—Football Match
 - 5:00—French Programs
 - 6:00—French News
 - 7:30—News Headlines
 - 8:00—Step by Step
 - 8:30—World Echo
 - 9:10—Kung Fu (New Talk Show)
 - 10:00—News at Ten
 - 10:30—Comedy
 - 11:00—Tennis From Wimbledon
- #### FRIDAY
- 3:00—Holy Koran
 - 3:05—Leo the Lion (Cartoon)
 - 3:30—Wish Booe
 - 4:05—Neighbors
 - 4:30—Winners Down Under
 - 5:15—Varieties
 - 5:30—French Film
 - 7:00—French News
 - 7:30—News Headlines
 - 8:00—The Health Show
 - 8:30—Hawkeye (Drama)
 - 9:10—500 Nations
 - 10:00—News at Ten
 - 10:30—Comedy
 - 11:00—Tennis From Wimbledon
- #### SAMEDI
- 3:30—Dessins animés
 - 4:30—Arsène Lupin
 - 6:00—Série policière
 - 7:00—Le Journal
 - 7:15—Magazine
- #### DOMINIQUE
- 3:30—Dessins animés
 - 4:30—Arsène Lupin
 - 6:00—Magazine
 - 7:00—Le Journal
 - 7:15—Magazine
- #### LUNDI
- 3:30—Dessins animés
 - 4:30—Arsène Lupin
 - 6:00—Documentaire

- ### PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS
- #### FRIDAY
- 3:00—Holy Koran
 - 3:05—Leo the Lion (Cartoon)
 - 3:30—Wish Booe
 - 4:05—Neighbors
 - 4:30—Winners Down Under
 - 5:15—Varieties
 - 5:30—French Film
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 - 7:00—Le Journal
 - 7:15—Magazine
- #### LUNDI
- 3:30—Dessins animés
 - 4:30—Arsène Lupin
 - 6:00—Documentaire

Video Releases

■ *Bad Moon*: Full moon, crescent moon, quarter moon, each is a Bad Moon for Ted Harrison. By day, he's a photo journalist enjoying a stay with family in the Pacific Northwest. By night, he transforms into a horrific half human-a war wolf.

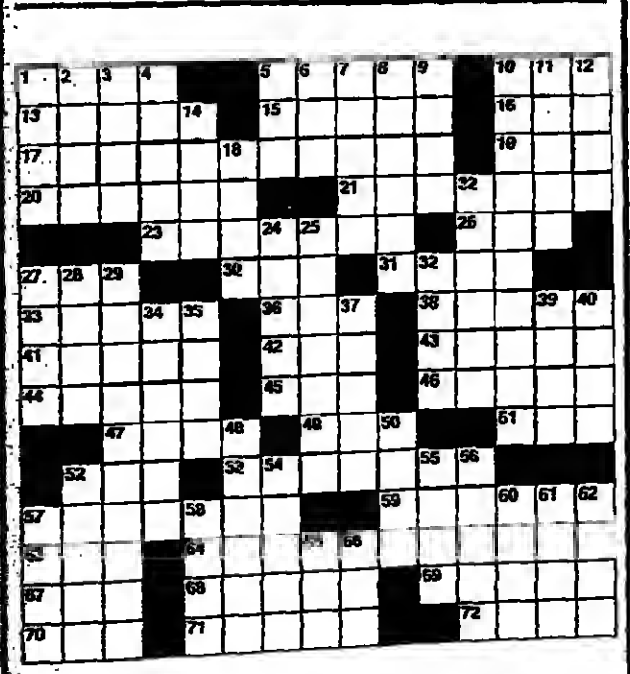
■ *Critters 2: (The Main Course)* Their hair balls from outer space, are back for seconds. In no time, eggs are popping open everywhere—a field full of live stock becomes a gigantic feeding ground, and local residents are disappearing by the mouth full. Can the bounty hunters from deep space wipe out the critters before an American town is erased from the map?

■ *Fly Away Home*: Inspired by a true story, this film tells the story of an orphaned child who stumbles on orphaned geese. Nurturing the baby geese does not mean she can teach them to fly, or does it? Find out in this terrific family fun.

■ *Mermaids*: The attractive Mrs. Flax (Cher) does not exactly lead a settled life. Whenever one of her romances fails, she moves to another city. That happened so far 18 times. Cher, her daughters Charlotte (Wynona Ryder) and Kate (Christina Ricci) and Cher's new romance (Bob Hoskins) put together a very enter training romantic comedy featuring the Choop Choop song.

Courtesy: "The Pleasure Dome" Tel: 676558 - Fax: 5538087

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ### ACROSS
- 1. Ruminant
 - 5. Be the equal of
 - 10. Magnon
 - 13. Represent
 - 15. Start shape
 - 16. By what means
 - 17. Underwear
 - 19. Fruit drink
 - 20. Prime rib, e.g.
 - 21. Put on guard
 - 23. Defensible
 - 24. Let's command
 - 25. Shit sense
 - 26. Pair
 - 28. Stencil
 - 29. Blazer's tool
 - 30. Earm
 - 41. 10 men
 - 42. Climb
 - 43. Study
- ### DOWN
- 2. Innocent one
 - 3. Literary conflict
 - 4. Nervous
 - 6. Lethargic
 - 7. Stadium cry
 - 8. Workmen's go
 - 9. Kind of pneumonia
 - 11. Eke feature
 - 12. Majesty
 - 14. Non-stop
 - 18. Anticipate
 - 22. Freight train
 - 24. Recedes
 - 27. Cash
 - 29. Ice hockey area
 - 32. Amo. email
 - 34. Soap opera, for one
 - 35. Cub
 - 37. Weird
 - 38. Scottish island
 - 40. Waste allowance
 - 48. Top (head position)
 - 50. Growl
 - 52. Karigan item
 - 54. Magritte and Clair
 - 55. Mopras
 - 56. Tilt
 - 57. Duel
 - 58. — did
 - 60. Read instrument
 - 61. Flat fish
 - 62. Tied
 - 65. Low grade
 - 66. Certain number
 - 67. abbr.

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: It's a good time to sell things. Group fund-raisers should go very well, while the moon's in Taurus.

Aries (March 21-April 19). If you do your shopping now, you'll get a better deal. Have the fireworks at your place; you love that stuff.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). You're smart, but not too lucky — especially with an older intellectual. Don't bother to argue. Money comes in, but goes out almost as fast.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Study money and increase your income. Finish the stuff on your lists. If you're smart, which you are, you can make some money.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Gather your team to make a big decision. If money's a problem, brainstorm in private. You and your confidant can come up with some good ideas.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). You're lucky in love. Although you have obligations, you also have the support of good friends. Somebody's talking about you.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your boss will seem rather schizophrenic today. He or she wants you to do two things at the same time. Finish up the assignment so you can party.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're in an action phase. A lack of funds slows you down. You'd be off like a rocket, if you didn't have to go to work.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Study a foreign language with a native speaker and you could wind up with a partner for life.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A new idea may fall flat, so take care. The competition's fierce. Just do your best and you'll be fine.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). If you have to choose between love and money, choose love. You can work harder and make more money.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Go straight home; you'll need the rest. Amazingly enough, you should schedule your big dates now. Try not to do anything too strenuous, though.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Do the work so you can make a wise decision. Your house is in an uproar. You may have to go somewhere else to hear yourself think.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: Friends are the key to your success. One will cost you money, but others will help you make more.

Bridge

Beware of Prestidigitators
By Omar Sharif and Tannah Hirsch

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ A Q 8 6 4
♥ 6 2
♦ A
♣ A 9 7 6 4

WEST
♠ K 10 7 3
♥ A Q 5 3
♦ 10 9
♣ K 10 5

EAST
♠ J 2
♥ 10
♦ J 8 7 6 5 4 2
♣ Q J 3

SOUTH
♠ 9 5
♥ K J 9 8 7 4
♦ K Q 3
♣ 8 2

The bidding:
North East South West
1♠ Pass 2♥ Pass
3♠ Pass 3♥ Pass
4♥ Pass Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Ten of ♠
Follow the bidding and play of this hand, then decide who, if anyone, erred. And if so, when?

Against four hearts, West led the ten of diamonds, taken perforce in dummy. A heart was led to the ten and jack, and West ducked smoothly. Impressed by the "successful" trump finesse, declarer crossed to the ace of clubs and led another heart. East's failure to follow was a jolt. West won the queen and exited with a diamond, taken in hand. Another high trump was taken with the ace, a club was led away from the king to East's jack, and a diamond ruff settled matters in favor of the defense. Was everything 100 percent?

First, we do not think the North hand, which contains no intermediate cards, was strong enough for a high reverse of three clubs. If North chooses to open one spade, the rebid should be two spades.

More damaging, though, was South's play. We, too, would have tried to repeat the trump finesse by crossing to the ace of clubs. Once the position became known, though, declarer could have done much better. There were three sure losers — two trumps and a club. Ergo, the spade king had to be outside for the contract to succeed.

When in with the diamond at trick five, declarer should have taken the spade finesse. When that wins, the only danger is a diamond ruff. South should cash the ace of spades and lead another. When East shows out, declarer discards a club from hand, cutting the defenders' link. Now there is no way for West to get a ruff and the game rumps home.

Kodak honors Jordanian distributors

DUBAI— Allied Trade and Supply Company, one of the Kodak distributors in Jordan, was recently presented with several awards at a ceremony hosted by Kodak (Near East) Inc., in Dubai, UAE.

The awards ceremony, one of the major events on the four-day agenda of the Kodak Distributors' Conference, recognizes qualitative and quantitative achievements of distributors. Awards are grouped into four categories: service Excellence, General manager's Quality Improvement, Marketing Excellence and Sales Growth, which includes three areas — Club 10, distributor of the Year and KNE's most prestigious award — the "Golden Falcon".

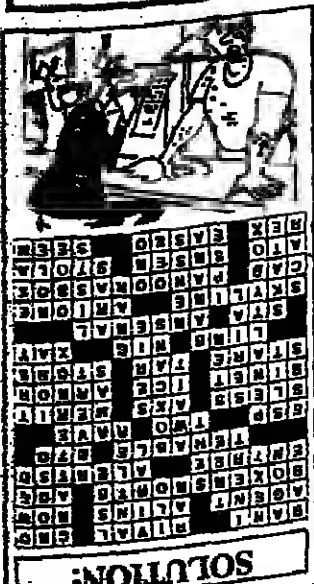
"We are honoured to be presented these prestigious awards," stated Mr. Akram Shaboun, General Manager of Allied Trade and Supply. "Kodak (Near East) has an excellent distributor support network that has been instrumental in our development, and has enabled us to continuously bring quality products to our customer."

Allied Trade and Supply was presented with a total of 4 awards; 2 Club 10 awards in the Professional and Consumer Imaging categories, the Marketing Excellence award in the Consumer Imaging category and the coveted Distributor of the Year award in the Consumer Imaging division.

The theme for the conference was: "Take Pictures. Further," highlighting the integration of both digital and analogue technologies in all Kodak's lines of business.

Mr. Andre Nahas, General manager of KNE said that "Kodak's success lies in the strong partnerships forged with our distributors, who have always exceeded and continually surpassed our most ambitious expectations. I am confident that together we will continue to accomplish the seemingly impossible."

The Kodak Distributor Conference is a major event on KNE's annual calendar. The conference was attended by over 100 delegates representing Kodak's Distributor organizations in the Middle East, as well as corporate business managers from Eastman Kodak worldwide.



DOES IS A
WORLD WHERE
PEOPLE DON'T
KNOW WHAT
THEY WANT AND
ARE WILLING TO
GO THROUGH
HELL TO GET IT.

Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RYBIN
GURAU
ANSAUE
SLARIO

Print answer here: A

Answers: BRINY AIGUR NAUSEA SAILOR

Would You Believe...

Of major U.S. cities, Las Vegas has the least average annual rainfall.

Christopher Wren designed 52 churches for London after the Great Fire of 1666.

Ella Fitzgerald's first million-selling record was "A Ticket, A Ticket."

The first Winnie-the-Pooh book was published in 1926.

Transylvania exists, and not just in a "Dracula" movie. It's actually a region of Romania.

Archaeologists rediscovered the ancient city of Troy in the 19th century.

Sam Rayburn served longer than anyone else as Speaker of the U.S. House — 17 years.

TRUE! By Daryl Cagle



Forty-one percent of people want to be told "I love you" more than once per day; 29 percent rarely or never say it.

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Retour de l'excision dans les hôpitaux égyptiens

Les islamistes ont marqué un point en obtenant que l'excision soit de nouveau pratiquée librement en Egypte. Une décision du tribunal administratif du Caire qui annule le décret du ministre de la Santé, promulgué en juillet 1996. Ce décret interdisait justement l'excision - l'ablation de la partie de la vulve et des petites lèvres - par le corps médical. « Dieu soit loué, nous avons gagné et nous allons appliquer l'Islam », s'est exclamé le principal instigateur du procès, cheikh Yousef Badri, entouré de femmes lançant des youyous de victoire devant le tribunal. Avant le procès, il avait expliqué qu'il souhaitait éviter aux jeunes filles le rasoir du barbière car de toute façon l'excision est pratiquée. Selon une étude gouvernementale récente, 97% des Égyptiennes (notre photo), musulmanes comme chrétiennes, sont en effet excisées et 4,3% des opérations se font dans un hôpital public contre 70,5% à la maison ou chez des voisins et 23,5% dans des cliniques privées. Présentes au tribunal, des militantes féministes ont annoncé qu'elles poursuivraient leur lutte contre l'excision. « L'excision n'a rien à faire avec la religion, c'est une tradition venue d'Afrique à travers le commerce », a tenu à préciser Siham Abdel, médecin et membre de l'Organisation égyptienne pour la population et le développement, « en Egypte, elle est pratiquée par les musulmans comme par les chrétiens, en Ethiopie, par les juifs, alors que dans des pays musulmans comme l'Iran et la Turquie, ce n'est pas pratiquée du tout ».



SELON

OM

La participation au gouvernement de l'ex-premier ministre Abdel Karim Kabariti était encore à l'ordre du jour du mouvement islamiste. Il y a à peine quatre mois. Mais aujourd'hui tout est changé et le boycott des prochaines élections législatives est désormais au centre des débats. Les partis d'opposition, y compris les islamistes, avaient déjà parlé de boycotter les élections tout de suite après la formation du nouveau gouvernement d'Abdel Salam Majali. Mais ils avaient rapidement tourné la page pour se lancer dans la préparation de la campagne. Sans se soucier des problèmes d'alliance aux élections, les partis nationalistes et de gauche doivent faire face, le Front d'Action Islamique (FAI) a franchi alors un pas important vers la formation de sa liste électorale.

La plupart des sections du FAI ont en effet tenu des réunions pour déterminer le nombre de sièges qu'ils vont briguer et désigner leurs candidats. Au total, le FAI en présenterait entre 35 et 40.

Or, l'adoption par le gouvernement de la loi provisoire sur la presse et les publications et le traitement de faveur accordé par la télévision au congrès du Parti National Constitutionnel pro-gouvernemental, semblent accentuer le malaise des cadres du mouvement islamiste à l'égard du pouvoir exécutif. Ils voient ainsi leur marge d'expression et d'action politique se réduire.

Au cours de sa dernière réunion, la direction des Frères musulmans a été la scène de divergences. Une majorité a opté pour le boycott des élections, ce qui aurait amené le secrétaire général du FAI à présenter sa démission de l'organisation mère.

À présent, le débat entre durs et modérés est rendu public. Les premiers insistent avec force sur la nécessité de revoir leur participation aux élections, les seconds en revanche ne voient aucune raison de remettre en cause la stratégie électorale du mouvement islamiste.

Il est de toute façon difficile d'imaginer que les islamistes aillent jusqu'au boycott du scrutin. Pour trois raisons : premièrement la participation aux élections se fait sous le nom du FAI qui a déjà donné le coup d'envoi de sa campagne ; ensuite, si boycott il y a, cela peut porter atteinte à l'unité des Frères musulmans eux-mêmes ; enfin ce débat est une forme de contestation fréquente à laquelle au fond le gouvernement est habitué dans le domaine des libertés publiques. Cela ne risque pas vraiment d'inquiéter le pouvoir en place.

Hussein Abu-Rumman

Le Jourdain, on y revient.
Tous les jeudis dans le Star
645 380

Affaire Dakamseh

Attention, procès à rebondissements

Coups de théâtre, révélations, suspensions d'audience, le procès du meurtrier des lycéennes israéliennes a commencé depuis bientôt un mois et il ne cesse de provoquer des remous dans l'opinion publique et la classe politique jordaniennes.

Il y a une semaine, l'accusé a prétendu qu'il avait été torturé par ses geôliers pendant sa détention. Une alléguant qui provoque une nouvelle suspension d'audience. L'avocat de la défense maître Hussein Mjalli, a refusé par ailleurs de faire comparaître son client à la barre avant d'avoir pu examiner le rapport psychiatrique.

Le capitaine Ahmed Dakamseh est en effet accusé d'avoir tiré délibérément sur un groupe de lycéennes israéliennes venues en excursion le 13 mars dernier à Baqoura, un territoire jordanien loué à l'Etat hébreu pour 25 ans selon le traité de paix israélo-jordanien. Sept d'entre elles ont été tuées.

Dès le début du procès, la défense a dénoncé la légitimité du Conseil Militaire (CM) pour juger ce soldat. Dans une lettre datée du 20 mars, le roi lui-même écrivait que Dakamseh aurait dû être tué par les autres militaires, présents au moment des faits. Une prise de position qui selon Hussein Mjalli mettrait en doute la neutralité du Conseil Militaire. Le roi est en effet le chef suprême de l'armée selon la constitution. Le président du CM a interrompu l'avocat impétueux en lui demandant d'entrer dans le vif du sujet.

Le témoignage d'Israéliens est le deuxième événement marquant de ce procès. L'un

des avocats de Dakamseh, Ahmed Nijawi, a préféré alors se retirer. Quant à Hussein Mjalli, président de l'Ordre des avocats, de tendance nationaliste, il a aussi protesté, avant d'accepter finalement de poser des questions aux Israéliens. Une concession pour mieux contre-attaquer ensuite. Certains témoins, en effet, n'ont pas prêté le serment habituel pour des raisons religieuses (une première dans les tribunaux jordaniens). Un geste exploité par la défense pour minimiser la valeur juridique des témoignages.

Plus de 100 avocats

Une semaine plus tôt, le président du conseil militaire a dû faire sortir Dakamseh de la salle. Le capitaine interrompait certains de ses collègues venus témoigner en criant : « ce n'est pas vrai, mensonge ».

Après le passage à la barre de tous les témoins du parquet, il ressort que Dakamseh a agi avec préméditation et qu'il a un penchant sexuel anormal.

Plusieurs points restent pourtant à éclaircir : l'interrogatoire de l'accusé s'est-il déroulé en l'absence d'avocat comme l'a déclaré la famille de Dakamseh dans une mise au point publiée au début du mois ? Le soldat a-t-il été torturé ? Souffrait-il de troubles psychiatriques ? Lors des prochaines séances, les ré-



Le rapport sur l'état psychiatrique d'Achmed Dakamseh sera sans doute l'un des tournants de son procès.

ponses à ces questions seront décisives pour un procès que l'opinion publique jordanienne suit avec grand intérêt, un procès hors du commun. Un comité de défense, composé de plus d'une centaine d'avocats de différents pays arabes, s'est d'ores et déjà constitué pour renforcer la défense du soldat.

Dakamseh sortira-t-il de cette épreuve en héros ou en simple criminel ? Il est notoire que dans l'opposition on cherche à exploiter cette affaire à des fins politiques à l'approche des élections législatives. L'impasse dans le processus de paix, la montée des tensions en Cisjordanie et le refus croissant chez

les Jordaniens de la normalisation avec Israël sont des cartouches supplémentaires qui peuvent permettre aux forces de l'opposition de reprendre le procès Dakamseh à leur compte.

Suleiman Sweiss

Découverte

La fête de la musique sur de bons rails

Plus de 300 personnes sont montées dans le train du Hedjaz, la semaine dernière. Entre Amman et Mafrag, la vieille locomotive à vapeur a traversé les plateaux du nord aux sons des guitares. Une expédition joyeuse organisée par le centre culturel français pour célébrer toutes les musiques du monde.

Trois sifflements

et une épaisse fumée noire s'élevaient dans le ciel bleu d'Amman. Le départ est imminent. Les derniers voyageurs pressés sautent dans les wagons. Les trains ont toujours leur lot de retardataires.

Une explosion de joie (d'excitation peut-être aussi) accueille enfin les premiers cris de bienvenue. Dans un dernier tanguage un peu brutal, le train du Hedjaz quitte lentement la gare de Mahatta. Direction Mafrag dans le nord-est du pays. Plantés à l'avant de la vieille locomotive à vapeur, les équipes françaises et jordaniennes claquent dans le vent. Après quelques kilomètres seulement, les premiers notes de musique font irruption dans les wagons.

Flûtes, tam-tam ou harmonicas, comme prévu, beaucoup ont apporté leur instrument favori.

Deux Français sortent leur guitare et rythment les danses de leurs compagnons de voyage qui malgré la chaleur swingent dans le couloir de circulation entre les banquettes de moleskine. Debors, citadins, fermiers ou bergers saluent de grands signes de la main ce convoi incongru qui effraie les troupeaux de moutons. Le passage du train du Hedjaz est assez rare pour faire l'événement dans les collines agricoles et les mines de phosphate d'Al-Rusafa.

Construit par les Turcs au début du siècle, le train relierait Damas à Médine en 1908. Les deux villes étaient alors à

trois jours de distance pour les musulmans, qui, seuls, pouvaient emprunter la ligne. Aupa-avant, les caravanes mettaient 40 à 50 jours pour couvrir la même distance. La ligne n'a pas connu par la suite les développements espérés. La Révolution « Jeune Turquie » en 1908 a empêché la poursuite des travaux vers la Mecque et pendant la première guerre mondiale, une partie du tracé a été endommagée par les troupes de Lawrence d'Arabie, qui sabotaient ainsi une voie de communication précieuse pour les Turcs. Avec les guerres israélo-arabes et la concurrence de la route et de l'avion, la ligne a peu à peu été abandonnée. Aujourd'hui, seules des excursions touristiques à l'instar de cette fête de la musique, pourraient encore sauver le train du Hedjaz de l'oubli.

Danse à Mafrag

La semaine dernière, l'heure n'était pas à ces conjectures. Après une première halte musicale à Zerqa, les 300 voyageurs débarquent le soir à la gare de Mafrag, ville ex-nihilo au milieu du désert. Sous l'oeil curieux des habitants et les rayons d'un soleil couchant, la piste de danse improvisée entre de grands lauriers-roses et une tente bédouine prend des couleurs de feu. Un groupe d'Espagnols donne la cadence en claquant des mains. Les accords orientaux et flamboyants d'Ibrahim Al-Madfa'i à la guitare composent le reste de cette magie crépusculaire.

« C'est vraiment une belle journée », s'enthousiasme Hadil Al-Maaliyah, en montant dans le train pour le chemin du retour, la casquette enfoncée jusqu'aux yeux. La jeune fille prenait le Hedjaz pour la première fois. Une expérience unique qu'elle a partagée avec une bande d'amis. Ensemble, ils se sont chargés de mettre l'ambiance dans le wagon qui les ramenait à Amman. Pendant plus de deux heures, ils ont passé en revue le répertoire folklorique arabe. M. et Mme Gilbert, deux Français à la retraite venus passer un mois en Jordanie, n'ont pas donné leur part au chahut. « J'adore la musique arabe », précise Daniel Gilbert, « et cette balade a été



Les sorties du train du Hedjaz sont rares. C'est donc un événement, quand il arrive à Mafrag, surtout pour les enfants.

pour moi exceptionnelle mais je préfère m'arrêter là de peur d'être trop diluvien. Pourtant à peine remis d'un infarctus, le vieil homme gaillard saisis son harmonica pour répondre à l'invitation dansante de Hadil et de ses amis.

La locomotive pousse encore des sifflements à chaque passage à niveau en vue. Mais ce n'est plus elle qui tire les rênes. A Mafrag, la vieille machine, épuisée par un trajet aller mené tambour-battant, n'a pu être remise en état pour le retour. Ravivée au rang de wagon, elle a été remplacée à la tête de l'orchestre par une locomotive au moteur diesel.

Vers 23 heures, le convoi arrive enfin en gare d'Amman. Terminus, tout le monde descend. Les drapeaux, souillés de charbon, sont décrochés. Le vieux train du Hedjaz se retrouve seul sous la pleine lune, ses wagons résonnant encore des bruits de la fête.

Le Jourdain

Simone Veil : « La paix doit venir des leaders politiques »

L'ancien ministre français des affaires sociales, de la santé et de la ville, n'a pas pris le train du Hedjaz, mais robe bleue nuit et teint hâlé, Simone Veil était bien à la gare de Mafrag, où elle a assisté au concert dansant. Sur un air de musique orientale, elle a ainsi achevé son séjour en Jordanie, pendant lequel elle a participé, aux côtés de l'ancien premier ministre israélien Shimon Peres, à un colloque des Nations Unies pour la formation des dirigeants.

Le Jourdain : Dans ce colloque, vous avez parlé de la coopération régionale pour la paix et la sécurité en vous appuyant sur le pari gagné de la communauté européenne. Comment selon vous, peut-on expliquer cette réussite ?

Simone Veil : Cet exemple de pragmatisme a vu le jour grâce aux efforts d'un homme, Jean Monnet, et également grâce à la volonté très forte de réconciliation de peuples qui



Simone Veil à Mafrag, aux côtés de l'ambassadeur de France en Jordanie, Bernard Bajelet.

étaient ennemis depuis des siècles. Il y a toujours eu en Europe une réelle volonté de dialogue, de compromis pour travailler ensemble.

L.J. : Le modèle européen est-il applicable au Moyen-Orient ?

S.V. : Après 40 ans de fonctionnement, l'Europe communautaire est un modèle d'intégration politique beaucoup trop poussé pour être repris dans l'immédiat au Moyen-Orient. Il ne faut pas oublier que les choses ne se font progressivement avec au départ un marché commun qui a démarré modestement. D'autre part, si les opinions publiques ont soutenu les initiatives des gouvernements, c'est au raison d'un véritable engagement des élites et des leaders politiques.

L.J. : L'engagement pour la paix d'un chef d'Etat tel que le roi Hussein peut-il servir les négociations israélo-palestiniennes ?

S.V. : Bien sûr, il est important d'aider les parties en présence dans leur recherche de la paix. Mais le roi Hussein reste malgré tout en dehors de la situation. La volonté d'aboutir à la paix doit venir d'abord des leaders et des peuples directement concernés par les négociations en cours.

Propos recueillis par Yasmine Lahmi

Chacun pouvait apporter son instrument de musique. Ce sont les joueurs de guitare qui ont surtout animé le voyage dès le départ d'Amman.

مكتبة ابن خلدون

Cinéma

Un festival franco-arabe toujours sans Jordaniens

Ouverture aujourd'hui du 3ème festival de cinéma franco-arabe. A la lecture du programme, on s'aperçoit que les couleurs jordaniennes ne sont pas représentées. Et pour cause, le cinéma n'a jamais vraiment été favorisé dans le royaume hachémite. Retour sur plus de 70 ans d'art et surtout d'essais.

En 1923, une rumeur se répand dans tout Amman. Incrédules, les habitants s'interrogent sur la réalité d'un tel phénomène. Ils parlent de «chouchous qui bougent, d'êtres qui se déplacent d'une façon bizarre et comique, sans que personne ne les pousse». Les premières projections cinématographiques alimentent les commentaires les plus ahuris. Au début, les séances se déroulaient sur les toits des maisons ou dans certaines casernes de l'armée anglaise encore présente.

Dans les années 50 ont lieu les premières tentatives de réalisation d'un film ou au moins d'un documentaire. Toutes échouent en raison de

moins matériels insuffisants. Il faut attendre 1964 pour voir se terminer le premier long métrage jordanien. Mais *Mon pays, mon amour* n'est jamais sorti des cartons. Seuls quelques extraits d'une qualité d'ailleurs très médiocre ont pu être projetés. De plus gros moyens sont mis sur *Temple sur Pétra* réalisé en 1965. Le film est en couleurs avec un casting international : des acteurs jordaniens venus du théâtre, des Anglais et même une Française, Christine Bourguignon (les cinéastes s'en souviennent-ils ?). Ce film policier, produit par Al-Tajer a malheureusement été interdit par la censure parce qu'il portait atteinte à dieu.

Le métrage subit le même sort en 1972. Seul le serpent en 1970 parvient à échapper aux ciseaux de la censure. Avec ce film, la Jordanie est représentée au premier festival du cinéma de Damas. Dans les années 60-70, le rythme des réalisations s'accroît. De nombreux films étrangers sont tournés en Jordanie : le fameux *Lawrence d'Arabie*, *D'ici et de là* de Jean-Luc Godard et même un «James Bond». Au contact des réalisateurs occidentaux qui utilisent pour leurs films des acteurs du pays, les Jordaniens se sentent davantage attirés par le cinéma. Ils produisent notamment des dizaines de films égyptiens qui connaissent un succès fou auprès du public arabe. En fait, ceux qui à l'époque croient encore à un cinéma «made in Jordanie» choisissent de travailler avec l'étranger : l'Egypte bien sûr mais surtout l'Italie et la Turquie.

La télé plus rentable
En 1977, Tawfik Essaid réalise et produit son premier film en Italie avec des acteurs italiens et jordaniens et un titre curieux : *Trois à l'intérieur... dix à l'extérieur* ! Ghazi Hawash a travaillé de la même façon avec les Turcs pour son film *Un aigle d'Orient*. Celui-ci est un succès commercial. Ghazi Hawash enchaîne avec deux

autres longs métrages et se retrouve récompensé dans plusieurs festivals. La qualité du cinéma jordanien est beaucoup plus soutenue qu'avant mais les tentatives de créer dans le royaume une véritable industrie cinématographique restent maigres.

Pour les réalisateurs Adnan Mdanat et Hayel Ajlouni et le critique Nageh Hassan, les raisons de l'échec du cinéma jordanien sont toujours les mêmes. Les producteurs du royaume refusent de financer des projets locaux et investissent plutôt dans le cinéma égyptien, plus rentable à court terme. Ils mettent aussi leur argent dans les séries télévisées jordaniennes qui connaissent un succès énorme auprès des téléspectateurs arabes. S'ajoute à cela le manque d'infrastructures : une trentaine de salles seulement dans tout le pays et d'équipements. Venir à bout d'un long métrage n'est pas une mince affaire.

Cela exige d'importantes ressources financières que qu'investisseurs privés et publics, pour l'instant, ne sont pas prêts à fournir. Selon Pierre Duc, chef de la mission audiovisuelle française en Jordanie, la coopération de la France a permis de faire évoluer un cinéma local dans de nombreux pays du Maghreb et du Moyen-Orient (Tunisie, Liban, Egypte, Iran...). Il ne désespère pas d'arriver aux mêmes résultats en Jordanie mais il remarque aussi que «créer une véritable industrie cinématographique demande un travail de longue haleine».

Ahmad N'Sour

Un homme de Jordanie, un film de Ghazi Hawash réalisé en collaboration avec les Turcs dans les années 70 et l'une des rares tentatives pour l'émergence d'un cinéma jordanien.



Les histoires palestiniennes

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Haifa

Le réalisateur : Rashid Masharawi est né à Gaza en Palestine. Il a réalisé deux courts métrages *Passage* (1986) et *Abri* (1989), quelques documentaires comme *De longues journées à Gaza* (1991), *Le Magicien* (1992) et *l'Attente* (1994). Rashid Masharawi a réalisé son premier long métrage de fiction *Couvre-feu* en 1994 pour lequel il a reçu le prix de la première œuvre à la 2ème Biennale des cinémas arabes à Paris.

Le film

En le voyant errer dans les rues de Gaza, on guetterait et d'autant trop fort, on pourrait prendre Haifa pour un film, obsédé par son désir de retour à la ville dont il porte le nom. Il y a en lui toute une humanité et dans ses yeux, le drame de ceux qui connaissent les camps de réfugiés.



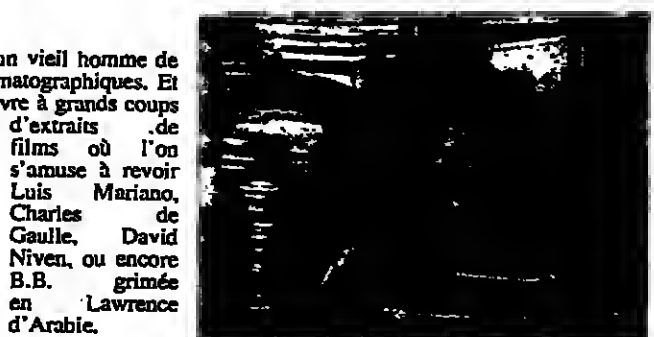
● Haifa
Palestine-Pays-Bas-France
(1995)
Couleur 35 mm, 75 minutes
Réalisation et scénario:
Rashid Masharawi
Interprètes: Mohamed Bakri, Hiyam Abbas, Fadi al-Ghoul et Khaled Awad

Il était une fois Beyrouth

Le réalisateur : Jocelyne Saab est née en 1948 au Liban. Après des études d'économie à Paris, elle produit et réalise pour diverses télévisions des documentaires (courts et de longs métrages) dont *Le Liban dans la tourmente* (1975), *Beyrouth, ma ville* (1982), *L'adolescente sacrée d'amour* (1986), son premier long métrage de fiction, relate la rencontre entre une adolescente couronnée depuis son enfance de films égyptiens et un peintre dans Beyrouth meurtri par la guerre.

Le film

Deux jeunes filles persuadent un vieil homme de leur montrer des archives cinématographiques. Et soudain Beyrouth se met à revivre à grands coups d'extraits de films où l'on s'amuse à revoir Luis Mariano, Charles de Gaulle, David Niven, ou encore B.B. grimpée en Lawrence d'Arabie.



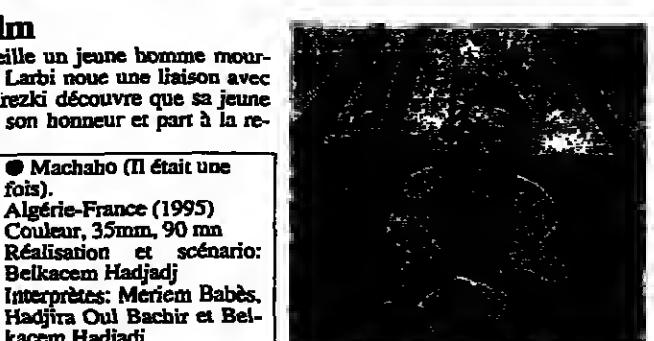
● Il était une fois Beyrouth
Liban-France (1995)
Couleur 35 mm, 105 mn
Réalisation : Jocelyne Saab
Interprètes : Myrta Makaron, Michèle Tyan, Pierre Chamassian

Machaho

Le réalisateur : Né en 1950 en Algérie, Belkacem Hadjadj est diplômé de l'Insa de Bruxelles. Il réalise en 1982 son premier court métrage, *La gousse*, qui restera censuré jusqu'en 1990. Dans les années 80, il a réalisé de nombreux films pour la télévision algérienne, *Machaho* étant son premier long métrage de fiction et le premier film algérien en langue berbère.

Le film

Un paysan kabyle, Arezki, recueille un jeune homme mourant, Larbi, et le ramène à la vie. Larbi noue une liaison avec la fille du paysan et disparaît. Arezki découvre que sa jeune fille est enceinte, jure de venger son honneur et part à la recherche du jeune étranger.



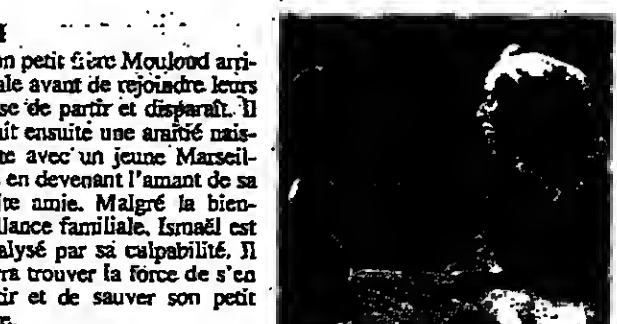
● Machaho (Il était une fois)
Algérie-France (1995)
Couleur, 35mm, 90 mn
Réalisation et scénario:
Belkacem Hadjadj
Interprètes: Meriem Babès, Hadjira Oul Bachir et Belkacem Hadjadj

Bye-Bye

Le réalisateur : Né d'une mère fervente de cinéma et d'un père tunisien, Karim Dridi a passé son enfance entre la Tunisie et la France. A l'âge de 19 ans, il se découvre une passion pour le cinéma de Scorsese, Vigo, Grémillon ou Renoir. Il s'attaque en 1994 à son premier long métrage, *Pigalle*, une plongée dans les quartiers chauds de Paris. En 1995, *Bye-Bye* est présenté au festival de Cannes, dans le cadre de la sélection officielle «Un certain regard».

Le film

Après un drame familial, Ismaël et son petit frère Mouloud arrivent à Marseille pour une courte escale avant de rejoindre leurs parents au pays. Mais Mouloud refuse de partir et disparaît. Il trahit ensuite une amitié naissante avec un jeune Marseillais en devenant l'ami de sa petite amie. Malgré la bienveillance familiale, Ismaël est paralysé par sa culpabilité. Il devra trouver la force de se sortir et de sauver son petit frère.



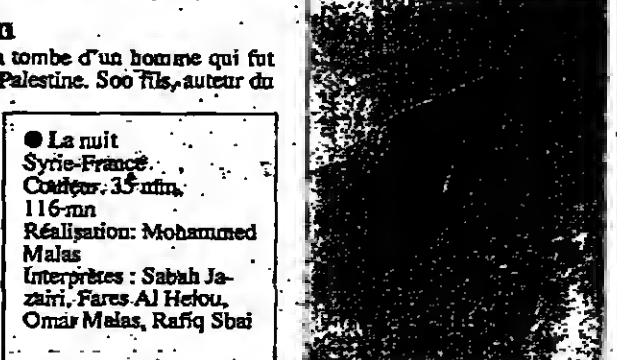
● Bye-Bye
Tunisie-France (1995)
Couleur, 35 mm, 102 mn
Réalisation: Karim Dridi
Interprètes: Sami Bouajila, Nozha Koudra, Philippe Ambrosini et Ouassini Embarek

La nuit

Le réalisateur : Mohamed Malas est né en 1945 à Qusitra. Après avoir achevé des études de cinéma à Moscou, il réalise de nombreux courts et longs métrages, *Les rêves de la ville* (1984), *Le rêve* (1987), *La nuit* a notamment obtenu le «Tarit d'or» au festival de Carthage de 1992.

Le film

Dans Qusitra en ruines, se trouve la tombe d'un homme qui fut un jour l'un des combattants pour la Palestine. Son fils, auteur du film, tente de reconstituer l'histoire de cet homme. Il cherche ainsi à exorciser un sentiment de honte et d'humiliation qui colle à l'image de son père comme à celle de sa ville occupée en 1967 par les Israéliens. Par cette reconstitution de la vie et de la mort de son père, l'auteur trace les contours d'une mémoire tourmentée par des questions brûlantes auxquelles les réponses sont toujours amères.

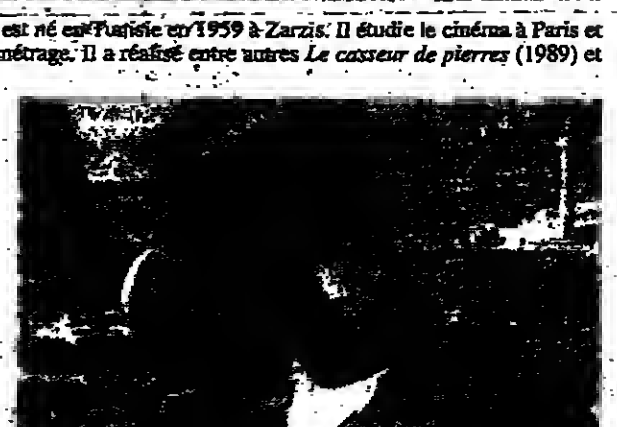


● La nuit
Syrie-France
Couleur, 35 mm, 116 mn
Réalisation: Mohammed Malas
Interprètes: Sabah Jazairi, Fares Al Helou, Omar Malas, Rafiq Sbati

Le réalisateur : Mohamed Zran est né en Tunisie en 1959 à Zarzis. Il étudie le cinéma à Paris et en 1987, il réalise son premier court métrage. Il a réalisé entre autres *Le casseur de pierres* (1989) et *Ya Nabil* (1993).

Le film

Tunis: la rencontre basarreuse entre Nidhal, jeune rebelle et Amine, artiste peintre. Amine suit Nidhal dans son quartier, Essaida. Une concentration de population issue de l'exode rural, installée aux abords de Tunis est qu'une de réve et de travail. Amine, guidé par Nidhal, découvre cet univers empreint de la violence d'une jeunesse déracinée. Nidhal, maltraité par son père alcoolique parce qu'il ne lui rapporte pas d'argent, sombre dans la délinquance.



● Essaida
Tunisie-France (1996)
Couleur 35mm, 100 mn
Réalisation : Mohamed Zran
Interprètes : Hichem Rostom, Chedli Bouzayen, Myriam Azaarouch, Abdallah Mimoun, Tayeb Oueslati, Fawzia Badr.

Courts métrages

Fictions

A travers elles

Liban-France (1995)/Réalisation: Koulou Ragheb
Trois femmes sont réunies dans un huis clos: la fille, la mère et la grand-mère hémiplégique. L'annonce du départ pour Paris de la fille déstabilise la mère. Elle cherche à la retenir à tout prix.

La lettre de Nabil

Liban-France (1995)/Réalisation: Sheila Barakat
C'est la guerre au Liban. Aya vit avec sa famille à Jouneid dans l'angoisse et le stress. Un jour, elle reçoit l'appel d'un homme, M. Nader, qui lui apporte une lettre de Nabil, l'homme qu'elle aime. Une machine de brève, elle part enfin chercher sa lettre et rencontre en cet homme une sorte de «fou de la paix» qui la subjugué.

Mashi

Liban-France (1995)/Réalisation: Menem Richa
Une photo du bonheur passé permet à un jeune homme d'échapper à la solitude. Mais le présent revient à l'assaut.

Ombres

Liban-France (1995)/Réalisation: Michel Kammoun
Un homme en poursuit un autre dans Beyrouth en ruine.

Réflexions dans le temps

Liban-Etats-Unis (1989)/Réalisation: Elda Khammarian
Une jeune femme libanaise en exil cherche la paix intérieure. Elle construit «ici» mais sa mémoire l'assaille et la ramène constamment «là-bas».

Lassive 10.452

Liban (1995)/Réalisation: Nadyne el-Khoury
Beyrouth 1990. Rien ne va plus. Vous ne peut plus laver son linge. Joumana est horrifiée: son mari veut jouer aux cartes avec ses voisins d'un milieu social différent.

Rencontre

Liban (1996)/Réalisation: Eliane Rabot
Trois personnages différents offrent chacun leur vision de Beyrouth. Le Beyrouth de l'après-guerre, ville de contrastes et de contradictions.

Les mesures de la distance

Liban-Canada (1988)/Réalisation: Mona Hatoun
En gros plan, sous sa douche, la mère de la cinéaste. Sur l'écran, une brève d'écriture arabe comme un voile sur le corps. Il s'agit des lettres écrites par la mère à sa fille.

Documentaires

Bâtir sur des vagues

Liban-France (1995)/Réalisation: Maher Abi Samra, Jérôme Allamargot et Aldo Pancari
Après six années de paix, le Liban se reconstruit. Mais de graves problèmes d'environnement persistent et compliquent le quotidien.

Nos guerres imprudentes

Liban-France (1995)/Réalisation: Randa Chahal-Sabbag
Depuis 1976, Randa Chahal Sabbag filme la guerre du Liban en 16 mm et sa famille en vidéo. Ce film, qui rassemble des images de Beyrouth et des siens, est une façon, comme elle le dit elle-même, de «retrouver une logique de la douleur».

Entre nous deux... Beyrouth

Liban-Belgique (1992)/Réalisation: Dina al-Joundi
Les retrouvailles entre deux sœurs, à Beyrouth, après la guerre. L'une s'est exilée et l'autre a toujours refusé de quitter le pays.

Si le peuple un jour...

Liban-France (1992)/Réalisation: Sylvio Taback/Michèle Tyan sous la direction de Borhane Alaouié
La jeunesse dans l'après-guerre à Beyrouth.

Residents face confiscation of identity documents

By Marjorie Miller

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—Mustafa Diab, born and raised in East Jerusalem, went to the Israeli Interior Ministry seeking residency papers for his Jordanian wife and nine children. But instead of granting permits, an official there seized the identity card that allows Diab to live in Jerusalem and gave the Palestinian truck driver 15 days to leave the country.

Two months later, Diab's 11-year-old daughter died, and his request for a death certificate to bury her in the family plot in Jerusalem was denied. No longer a legal resident, Diab had no rights in Jerusalem, the Israeli authori-

ties told him.

"I am destroyed," Diab said. "How can I describe it? They kicked me out of my homeland and I cannot do anything about it."

Despite Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's public vows to rectify the problem, Palestinian human rights activists assert that Israel is accelerating the confiscation of identity cards from Palestinian residents of Jerusalem, stripping them of the right to live in the disputed city.

Palestinians charge the Israeli government is trying to reduce the Arab population of East Jerusalem in advance of negotiations over control of the holy city and other key issues.

"They want to change the balance between Jews and Arabs and say there are no Palestinians in Jerusalem," said human rights attorney Ahmed Rwaiedy of the Arab Thought Forum in the Palestinian town of El-Ram. "This is ethnic cleansing," the same as in Bosnia.

The Interior ministry responds that it is simply enforcing long-standing residency requirements. Anyone who has lived in Israel without interruption may continue to do so with all entitlements, says ministry spokeswoman Tova Ellinson.

But she adds, the law states that anyone who lives abroad for seven years, or who

receives a permanent residency permit or passport from another country, has moved his or her "center of life" is no longer a resident of Israel.

Most of the approximately 160,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem have refused to take Israeli citizenship. The Palestinians want East Jerusalem as the capital of an independent state.

Palestinians are incensed that they are treated as foreigners in the land where they were born—in many cases before Israel captured East Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast War. They say successive Israeli governments have forced them to live outside the city by restricting housing construction in tradi-

tionally Arab East Jerusalem and refusing to allow their West Bank and Jordanian spouses to move there.

Moreover, they say, Israel recognized their status as Jerusalem residents for decades even if they studied or worked abroad, as long as they kept their identity documents current. Mustafa Diab, who lived in Jordan for many years, renewed his without problems in July 1994.

The practice of seizing identity cards began in late 1995, under the previous Labor government, and has been increasing ever since. The Interior ministry acknowledges that it has withdrawn 1,347 cards from Palestinians in the last 18 months, and that 402 other cases are pending. The US Consulate knows of 110 Palestinians with American passports who either had their Jerusalem IDs revoked or have been told they would be taken.

"Our concern is that the law hasn't been applied this way before," said a US consular officer. "And seemingly it is only applied to Palestinians. There are a lot of Jewish people in Orthodox neighborhoods who never regularized their status, but they are not affected. There are no cases of Jews losing residency."

Human rights activists fear that tens of thousands of Palestinians living abroad or outside of the municipal boundaries eventually could be affected.

The concern is palpable at the Interior ministry in East Jerusalem, where Palestinians line up to register babies, request passes to travel and permits to re-enter Israel, or renew their work identity cards. They fear that any contact with the Israeli authorities will offer an opportunity for officials to revoke their IDs.

Palestinians are rendered "nationless" when their cards are seized. The Palestinian Authority will not give them a passport because they are Jerusalemites. But without an ID, they cannot live legally in Jerusalem, work, receive Israeli health insurance or travel.

This situation forced Diab to move his family into the one-room basement of his father's home in a Palestinian village outside of Jerusalem. "I cannot earn a living and support my kids," Diab said. "I am in despair."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

'Eyed in Gaza'

By Andrew Rosemarino

KHAN YUNIS, Gaza—On the day of perhaps the most violent demonstrations in the Gaza Strip since the opening of the Hasmonean tunnel in Jerusalem last September, I set out for that area, home to a million Palestinians. Together with some other foreign invitees, I traveled with "Netivot Shalom," a small Israeli movement of Jewish religious peace-seekers. (The movement takes its name from the biblical verse "The ways of the Torah are pleasant ways, and all its paths are peace.")

Throughout the visit, citizens of the Gaza Strip were astonished to come across peace-loving religious Jews. But the ensuing dialogue was very friendly, addresses were swapped and jokes shared. The chairman of the movement, Yitzhak Frankental, wears a black skull-cap. He lost his son in a Palestinian attack and decided that too much blood had been spilled and that he must do something about it: he decided to work for peace.

Others in the movement told me they believe in peace out of religious conviction. "Arabs are also created in the divine image," I was told. "Why can't we live together in peace?" During my visit, violence erupted in several places. There were two series of incidents.

Firstly, an Israeli settlement put up a protective fence around its perimeter, saying it was to stop thieves. Palestinians said the fence had been put up on private Arab land, and that this was yet another occasion of illegal seizure by Jews of Arab territory. The demonstrators sought to tear down the fence. During the ensuing clash, Israeli troops opened fire, one Palestinian died and four were injured.

Secondly, Minister for National Infrastructure, Ariel Sharon, scarcely the darling of Palestinians, arrived to unveil a plaque to the memory of an Israeli army soldier, killed there during the clashes over the opening of the Jerusalem tunnel. Sharon's convoy was fired upon, but nobody was injured. Palestinian drivers sought to block the Israeli's path to the monument, and honked their horns through the ceremony.

The Israeli government claimed the demonstrations were initiated by the Palestinian Authority, in order to put pressure on Israel, but the head of Israeli army in the Strip would not say this. However, he was unhappy about the lack of help from the local Arab security forces, and said Palestinian policemen had participated in the demonstrations.

The Gaza strip is home to about 1 million Arabs and just over 5000 Jews. Given the



Hebron—An Israeli soldier tries to put out the fire which spread to his uniform as a result of a petrol bomb. Demonstrations in the city, in its third week and started because of land confiscation shows no sign of abating, but are expanding to the rest of the Palestinian territories.

extensive Israeli army presence in the area, protecting those settlers inhabiting ancient Philistia must cost Israel an arm and a leg. One can easily understand how Yitzhak Rabin began his negotiations with Yasser Arafat with a "Gaza first" plan.

I accompanied the group to a new combined hospital, training and cultural center in the heart of Khan Yunis, its 140,000 inhabitants making it the Strip's second biggest city after the Gazan metropolis, which contains roughly half of the population of the entire Strip. We were welcomed by Dr. Fadi Arafat, the president of the Palestinian Red Crescent, who looks like a twin of his older brother, Yasser. They share an ubiquitous broad smile with darting dark brown eyes deeply set in the same face.

Only the absence of a keffiyah and of a fresh beard distinguish the two brothers in appearance. The doctor, surrounded by gleaming and bright furniture, which contrasted with the dour and destitute appearance of the rest of the city, told me with great pride how the Crescent's 70 hospitals throughout the Middle East are open to all patients, irrespective of their nationality.

The Strip has recently been hit by the scourge of meningitis, and as illness does not recognize international boundaries, he appealed for Israeli help, pointing out it was in Israel's health interests to work closely with its Palestinian neighbors.

He told the group that in a meeting in Italy with Israelis as early as 1975, he had proposed peace, after asking his interlocutors if they were in a position to wipe out the entire Palestinian

people, or to annihilate the inhabitants of Israel.

"No," he said forcefully, "we cannot destroy each other, so we must make peace." He advocated that Israel and the Palestinians work together in all fields: technological and cultural. "We should make music together," he concluded. Asked about the enormous sums of foreign aid to the Palestinian Authority which have disappeared, he said that he could not speak for the Authority, but pointed out it was a new body, and could not be expected to live up to the standards of more established states, so early in its existence.

He also contested the enormous waste and bureaucratic pettiness in many Western aid projects, with the efficient way his own organization had built his hospital in Khan Yunis on a much smaller budget. He spoke persuasively, and with considerable charm.

(The Israelis present told me they shared this view and that because of its charm, Yasser Arafat's puppet was voted the most popular in a survey of viewers of Israeli TV's equivalent of "Spitting Image," a satirical puppet show about Israeli politics.)

As Dr. Arafat spoke he was guarded by Palestinian police, armed forces, and secret services, as we guests were. Tanks were on the move not far away. The time for Palestinians and Israelis to dance together has not yet come.

Andrew M. Rosemarino, an international lawyer, is doing research on the Peace Process.

O'Connor cancels concert at joy of Israeli right-wing groups

By Barton Gellman

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—Irish pop star, provocative sort—a lapsed Catholic named Buddha, who once tore up a picture of the pope on TV, well remembered here for a fistfight outside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—schedules Jerusalem concert to urge Jews and Arabs to share their city nicely.

Death threat follows. Anonymous caller announces that if Sinead O'Connor turns up, the concert is her last. Singer cancels, saying she "cannot put in danger the lives of my two children, my musicians and my technicians." Jerusalem's mayor expresses delight at this turn of events.

This holy city sometimes seems to revel in its pathologies, and O'Connor's aborted plan to sing here last Saturday has put several on display.

The concert was supposed to be the keynote event in a five-day festival titled, "Sharing Jerusalem: Two Capitals for Two States." That annoyed some opponents of a Palestinian state or a Palestinian share of sovereignty in East Jerusalem, and it elicited a confession, of sorts, on Israeli radio Monday afternoon. Itamar Ben Gvir, a fringe-of-the-fringe right-winger, phoned a call-in program to say that his Idea Front, successor to the banned Jewish nationalist Kach movement, had driven O'Connor away.

"I don't deny that an activist from the

Idea Front threatened

O'Connor," he said. "I can only say that it is our credit the fact that O'Connor is not coming to Israel. A singer that preaches and calls for dividing Jerusalem and propagates goyish (gentile) culture has no place in Israel."

Ben Gvir has certain credibility problems. He has a track record of fabricating violent escapades, saying, for example, that his men were responsible for a bomb blast that turned out to be a natural gas explosion. And yet almost everyone here took for granted that whoever made the death threat had the "Sharing Jerusalem" program as his target.

Jerusalem Link, an alliance of Israeli and Palestinian feminists that sponsored the program, issued a statement expressing "our deep sadness and our outrage at those individuals who have issued such threats in an attempt to silence the voices of peace in our city and our region."

Ehud Olmert, Jerusalem's Likud Party mayor, had other complaints. Speaking on the same radio program as Ben Gvir, he pronounced himself shocked to discover "political purposes" behind



O'Connor

O'Connor's concert plans. He called it a "provocation" and expressed his pleasure at her decision to pull out.

Olmert, a proponent of asserting exclusive Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem at all costs, accused the concert organizers of "acting fraudulently and misleadingly" to obtain a city permit for the concert—which was to have taken place at Sultan's Pool, just beneath the Old City walls along the former dividing line between East and West Jerusalem.

O'Connor's cancellation, Olmert maintained, came when the ticket-buying public showed the good moral fiber to stay away. "It appears the people of Israel are smarter and more responsible; they simply didn't buy tickets," he said. At Jerusalem Link, organizers said that about 2,000 tickets had been sold and that demand was not the problem.

This situation forced Diab to move his family into the one-room basement of his father's home in a Palestinian village outside of Jerusalem. "I cannot earn a living and support my kids," Diab said. "I am in despair."

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ROYAL JORDANIAN

Reflecting the Change.

CIA suspect's prosperous clan reacts angrily to arrest in Pakistan

By Kenneth J. Cooper

QUETTA, Pakistan—Beyond the tall metal gate of the recessed driveway, sunk along a busy row of small shops, the oldest brother of Mir Aimal Kansi has been receiving his clan's elders and other relatives who have streamed into the walled compound to deliberate on how to aid a family member jailed in a distant land.

In the six days since Mir Aimal Kansi was captured and later flown from Pakistan by FBI and CIA agents with assistance from Pakistani authorities, family members and residents of his home town have tried to make sense of the arrest of a member of Quetta's most prominent family on charges he killed two CIA employees and wounded three others in a 1993 attack outside the agency's Langley, Va., headquarters. If convicted, he could face the death penalty.

The family is highly disturbed. There is a lot of tension. They're in a state of shock," said Hamidullah Kansi, 43, the eldest brother of the murder suspect and by tribal tradition the head of his extended family since their father's death in 1989.

The elder Kansi also disputed suggestions that his brother was motivated to attack CIA headquarters because he blamed the agency for his father's death.

Hamidullah Kansi said Abdullah Jan, their father, never worked for the CIA during the Afghan war against occupying Soviet troops, as has been reported in published accounts, and died a natural death at 68 from liver cancer complicated by heart problems. Hamidullah Kansi also denied

that any Kansi relative was killed by Afghanistan in 1984 during the war, an incident also cited as a possible motive.

Here in Quetta, a city of 800,000 near the border with Afghanistan, the reaction to Kansi's arrest, predominantly worry and anger, has reverberated in concentric circles from his immediate family, to the prosperous extended Kansi clan that numbers more than 20,000, to the larger Pashtun ethnic group to which they belong.

Leaders of minor political parties in the capital of Baluchistan Province also have taken up the issue, criticizing the national government for ignoring its own extradition laws and permitting a foreign country to haul off a Pakistani citizen without giving him a court hearing as provided by law.

"Why did our government hand over Mir Aimal Kansi? That is the question. We want to know," said Tariq Mahmood, who until recently owned a video store in Quetta. "Of course, we are angry."

Other residents interviewed on the city's crowded streets sounded indifferent to or unaware of Kansi's arrest last Sunday in Punjab Province. "The people who are talking about Kansi are Pashtuns, because he is a Pashtun," said Ghulam Abbas, a tailor of Persian descent. "They're feeling a loss."

Pakistani newspapers have described the swift transfer of Kansi to the United States as a loss for the nation's prestige and the rule of law, which has yet to be firmly established in a country directly ruled for half its history by the military.

A front-page article in Saturday's edition of the *Nation*, for instance, charged that the fugi-

tive's capture "belittled a nation of 130 million, making it look like a tin-pot island republic which has neither laws of its own nor respect for itself or its sovereignty."

The government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who was elected in February, has not acknowledged any role in the seizure of Kansi. Independent reports indicate that Pakistani security officers participated in the early-morning operation, and that Kansi was put on a US government plane at the airport in Islamabad, the nation's capital.

US officials had complained for more than four years that Pakistani authorities were not pursuing Kansi aggressively. The government's apparent co-operation in his arrest and transfer—even if under American pressure—resolved a major dispute between the countries, whose relations have seethed since the end of the Cold War, when they were close allies.

Relations soured during Sharif's first term as prime minister, from 1990 to 1993, when State Department officials contended his government did not do enough to check international terrorism and drug trafficking with roots in Pakistan. Even though Sharif commands a two-thirds majority in parliament, his government's co-operation has risked a political backlash here.

Recent Pakistani governments have aired their own complaints about the United States—an arms cutoff since 1990, the failure to refund millions paid for 28 F-16 fighter jets and the arrest of a Pakistani air force commander in New York on drug trafficking

charges—but never have abandoned what some Pakistanis describe as an obsession with winning US approval.

In the Kansi case, the government ignored a 1972 extradition law that requires a Pakistani citizen to be given a hearing before a magistrate and the chance to appeal to higher courts before being released to another country to face criminal charges.

Former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, now the opposition leader in parliament, has not joined other politicians in criticizing the violation of Pakistani law; her government in 1995 similarly released Ramzi Yusuf, then a suspect in the World Trade Center bombing in New York.

Kansi's family has challenged the lack of extradition procedures, faulting both Pakistan and the United States. "What is American law? Does American law say you go anywhere and pick up anybody? Is that fair?" Hamidullah Kansi asked.

Family members said they were trying to retain an American lawyer, with help from Amnesty International and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, to replace a public defender appointed after Mir Aimal Kansi told a court in Fairfax County, Virginia, USA, that he was indigent.

He reportedly had to scrounge for less than \$15 to pay for a room in the seedy hotel where he was captured, but his large family commands considerable financial resources through its business interests and farmlands.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Arcadia

The village of lost dreams

By Stefan Wagstyl

JAI SINGH flingers the battered sword which once belonged to his grandfather. It is the family's last possession from the days before independence, when it roled the village of Chanukhera on the northern edge of the north Indian plains. Even the silver scabbard has been sold to help clear debts, pay taxes and provide daughters with dowries.

It has gone the same way as thousands of acres of land on which the former Rajas of Chanukhera held hunting parties for British officers. The family's retainers, elephants, and 1930s Austin motor cars are all a fading memory.

Jai Singh, who is 62, can barely bring himself to talk about the past. He looks away in shame when his son, Arun Kumar Singh, 27, explains how the family brought ruin on itself. "There was so much eating and drinking. They continued to enjoy themselves although the money was no longer there. By the time I was old enough to realise what was happening it was too late."

Chanukhera retains an other-worldly air in which time moves more slowly than in the cities. It lies along a road about 5km from the nearby market town of Domariaganj, surrounded by fields of rice, wheat and vegetables. Agriculture brings two seasons of hard work, but otherwise leaves people free to let small tasks fill half a day. Life revolves around cooking, washing, fetching water and digging vegetables.

It is easy to see how, in this sleepy atmosphere, Jai Singh and his relatives let things drift. Even today, they refuse to do manual work. Their last remaining source of income is a small mill for grinding rice and wheat. But rather than

operate it themselves, they hire a labourer. A neighbour says: "They will not work. So those who once lived like kings are now beggars."

But not everyone has let time slip by. The advent of the vote and of land reform, of fertilisers, pesticides and tractors, of television and the start of bus services to Domariaganj have transformed Chanukhera.

The population has swelled from about 1,000 to 3,500, but farm output has soared and so have the possibilities of education and work outside the village.

The demand for land is more intense than ever. The custom of dividing holdings equally among sons and selling off parcels to raise money for daughters' dowries has reduced many plots to the point at which they cannot support a family. Among thakurs, the dominant landowning caste, the average holding has fallen from 25 acres in the 1960s to two or three acres. J.P. Singh, landowner, says: "Daughters are a curse."

Chanukhera's traditional centre lies about 300 metres off the Domariaganj road. Here stands Jai Singh's whitewashed brick house, complete with a portico of classical columns. Around it are the homes of other thakurs and of a few Brahmins, the traditional priestly caste. A little farther from the road is a marketplace, surrounded by the brick-built homes of Hindu and Muslim traders from middle-ranked castes. Beyond them the lowest castes live in mud huts.

For centuries the marketplace was the heart of village life. But since independence the focus has shifted to the main road, where steady increases in traffic have encouraged more. The worst excesses of the caste system have been curbed in Chanukhera. Thakurs can no longer beat the lower

castes with impunity or rape their daughters. The advent of lower caste governments in the 1990s in the state of Uttar Pradesh, to which the village belongs, has given some confidence to the lower castes. Thakurs say the former untouchables now complain to the police about the slightest offence.

People from different castes even gossip together something that would have been rare 30 years ago.

Nevertheless, caste remains the single most important social distinction in village life. Everyone is aware of everybody else's caste. There is virtually no inter-marriage. Even though the main village temple is now open to all Hindus, the lowest castes worship at their own modest shrine. "Why should we go anywhere else," says Sugana, a 40-year-old mother of four.

At the top of the village hierarchy, the Hindu landlords retain their dominance, filling the vacuum left as the Raja's family declined. But these households have had to fight for their success mainly by supplementing farm incomes by finding city jobs for their children. A life that was once taken for granted has become a competition in which landowners have a head start but are no longer sure to win.

Successful thakurs have been forced to share power with families from the middle-ranking castes, mainly traders, including many Muslims. The richest man in the district is no longer the Raja of Chanukhera but Kila Bullah, a Muslim businessman who made his fortune with a brick kiln and now runs a petrol station, a scooter dealership, and a property portfolio that includes much of the old Raja's former possessions.

The advance of the middle castes has not been fully shared with the very poor the landless labourers of the lowest castes, who were once known as untouchables. They no longer die of hunger as before. But they are racked by tuberculosis and malnutrition. And they remain utterly dependent on the landowners for work.

Among the former untouchables there is virtually no one who can read. They say they cannot see the point when even landowners' children who go to school cannot get jobs.

At the other end of the social scale, Arun Kumar Singh, the former Raja's great-grandson, says the same. "I have a BA degree. It didn't help me." He looks wistfully across the dusty courtyard in front of his family's home. "If only our money had not all gone, things would be different."

Financial Times Syndication

Handover through a haze of opium

By John Ridding

WITH AN impassioned speech and a tantalising promise, Denon gestured towards an ornate Chinese vase. "Like the great Qing dynasty it represents, it is filled with nothing but self-importance," the Taipan told his parliamentary audience. "One touch and it will shatter," he added, knocking the vessel to the ground. As the pieces scattered, he turned to the benches: "This is the China I offer you."

So started the 19th century Opium War, a series of one-sided skirmishes which led to Britain's acquisition of Hong Kong. At least, that is how it happened in Opium War, the movie, a barrooming epic released last week to mark the territory's return after 156 years under the Union Jack flag.

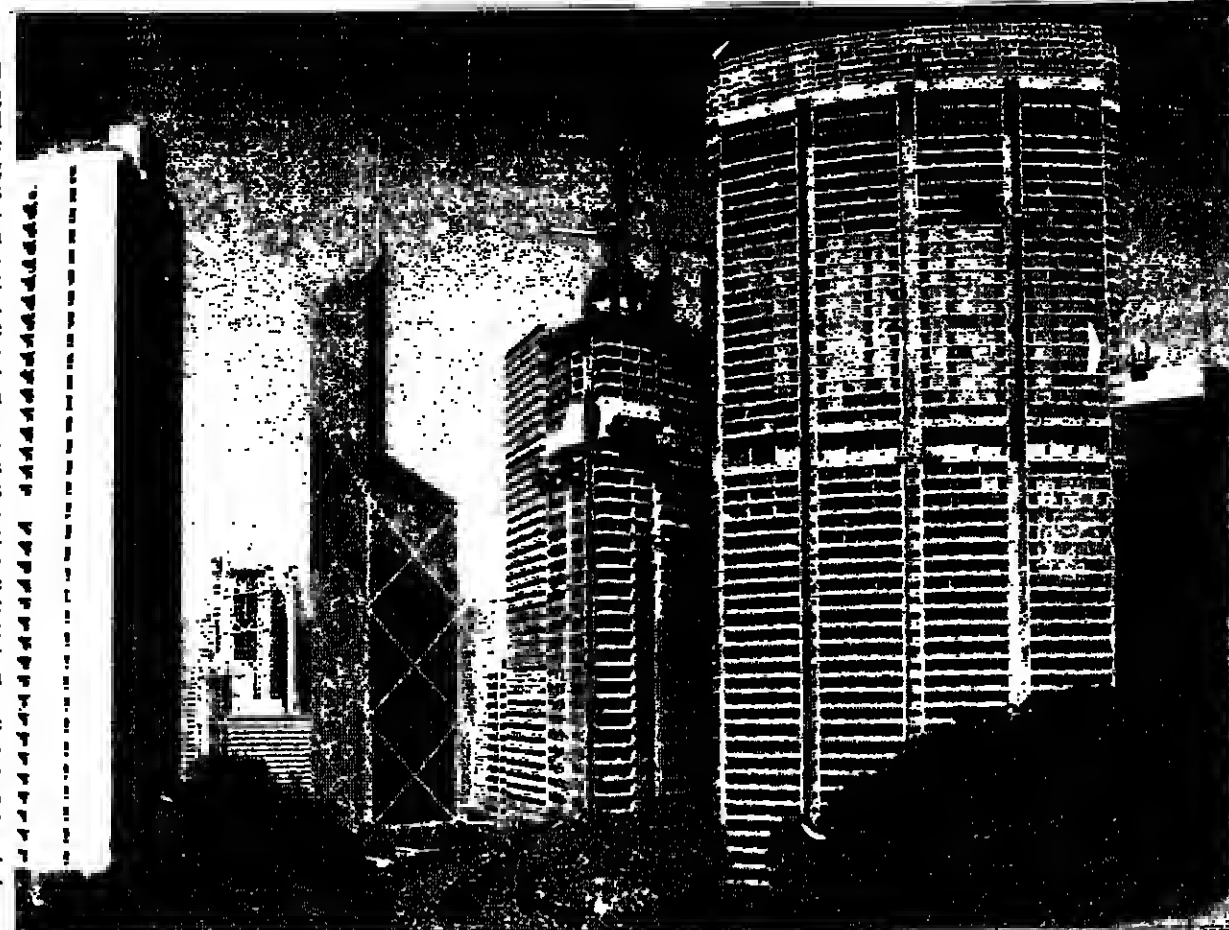
The film at \$12m, the most expensive ever produced in China, will be screened in more than 1,000 cinemas across the mainland and Hong Kong. It is the most lavish of many recent reminders of the colony's ignominious roots. And it will add to a thickening haze of opium through which many Chinese will view Britain's withdrawal.

Apart from the film, there are Opium War amusement parks, museums and even computer games. The Optical Memory National Engineering Research Centre of Qinghua University in Beijing has been developing an Opium War game as part of a patriotic series.

Last weekend, crowds from the mainland and Hong Kong watched as opium was burned in the Pearl River Delta town of Humen during a ceremony commemorating the destruction of 20,000 cases of the drug and the outbreak of the Sino-British war. Dance troupes from Beijing to the border boomtown of Shenzhen, are rehearsing Opium War routines for handover extravaganzas from July 1.

This orchestration is not accidental. The Opium War provides fertile ground for China's propaganda machine as it prepares for the transfer of sovereignty. "China's backwardness and decadence caused its defeat in the Opium War," says Xie Jin, the movie's director. While he insists he has not made propaganda, his message echoes that of Beijing, always pleased to play the victim in international theatre.

Modern technology and the "open door" policy has at least helped China make more credible



Technological Hong Kong is a reality. People are wondering whether this will stay under Chinese rule

films. In the past, the cinematic sacking of the Summer Palace by British troops under Lord Elgin was played out by Chinese actors with badly glued ginger beards, as there were not enough east European diplomats to make up the cast.

As with the vase shattered on celluloid, Qing dynasty China was fragile. "The war showed that you have to be united and have advanced technology or you will be vulnerable," said a Hong Kong movie-goer. "If you are weak you will not prosper."

That is not all it shows, nor all the purposes it serves. A cautionary tale of corruption, it has contemporary relevance alongside Chinese president Jiang Zemin's crusade for "spiritual values". As a stick to beat the British as they hand over their eastern colony, the 19th century is hard to equal. Drug dealers have never been fashionable.

Xie insists he does not want to thump the British. "That is a superficial view. The important thing is to give a true story." So far, he argues, Hong Kong people have seen a trade conflict between British commercial interests and a protectionist China. His movie, he believes, is no different from other historical epics. "Schindler's List was about the Holocaust. But that

was not considered anti-German propaganda."

Although the director criticizes Britain for failing to acknowledge its 19th century guilt, comparing its stance with Japan's after the second world war, Xie says his film shows "certain morally upright aspects of the British".

He cites the parliamentary debate, and the narrow margin in favour of war. The film is also careful to avoid specific targets. Instead of Jardine or Matheson, still operating in the colony, he picks fictional names for the opium traders of the time.

Such careful handling reflects a desire by Xie, and by China, to stir patriotic sentiment without prompting an anti-British backlash. Like opium, nationalistic fervor requires careful handling. Beijing is anxious to avoid undermining international confidence in its newly acquired business city.

For T. K. Leung, professor of comparative literature at Hong Kong University, there is little to worry about on that score. "Hong Kong people are too cynical to accept propaganda," he says.

Similarly, Martin Lee, leader of the Democratic party, sees little chance of an anti-British backlash. He believes that partly reflects

Hong Kong's role as a refuge from the mainland and fears that Beijing's heavy hand will become more apparent once the territory is back in the fold.

But, for Leung and others in Hong Kong's cultural community, there are dangers. "The mainland is trying to rewrite the history of Hong Kong," says the professor.

Apart from the Opium War, he cites artistic and archaeological studies which portray Hong Kong as a bustling community before the arrival of the British. The aim is to shed the image of a "barren island", as dismissed by Lord Palmerston, and so reduce the British contribution.

"The annals of history are evidence that Hong Kong has been Chinese since ancient times," declared the People's Daily this week, citing the 36 prefectures one of which administered Hong Kong established by the Emperor Qin Shihuang in 221BC. "More than 100 years of colonial rule is just a flash. Chinese blood and aneries forever joined together is history's inevitable result."

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The first mobile telephone satellite for the region: A second "Thuraya" for Arabs!

By Jawad Abbassi

Special to The Star
ARAB NAME one beautiful star in the sky, "Thuraya" and refer to it in poetry and proverbs. One of these proverbs underlines any stark contrast by wondering how distant the "Thara" (sky to earth) is from the "Thuraya".

An impending 21st century development, however, will soon make this proverb ironic and, for that matter, incorrect. This is because a second "Thuraya" is scheduled to appear in the sky by the year 2000 and is intended to bridge the huge distance the proverb talks about.

The second "Thuraya" is a mobile telephone satellite venture planned to expand the range of telephone coverage in many areas. According to a report published by Reuters, the Thuraya satellite would cover the Middle East, North Africa, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Southern Europe and possibly parts of Southeast Asia.

This means coverage could extend to South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and other Asian nations, depending on the market demand. The Thuraya satellite, the Middle East's first mobile telephone satellite, will provide services encompassing voice,

data, fax and messaging. The venture, which is owned by the Emirates' Inisat, Arabsat, the German Detscom Co., and some 10 other investors, will have a significant advantage in that it will provide telephone access to rural and



remote areas where conventional telephone services are not economical or possible. The data services of the satellite will mean a boost in the possibilities for data interconnection in the Middle East and could spur the growth of Internet connections and other data services such as X.25. The launch of the satellite will also signal a better future for the telecommunications sector and its associated sectors, data provision and the Internet, in the region.

The company, with a starting capital of \$500 million, is

expected to award the contract to build and launch the Thuraya Satellite in the coming Autumn. The Satellite's estimated cost is \$850 million and will be built by one of the three companies of France's Aerospatiale, Hughes Space & Communications International and Lockheed Martin which are the three competitors for the contract. It is also expected that Ericsson will provide the hand terminals for the mobile telephony service of the satellite.

The fact that many of the shareholders of "Thuraya" are publicly-owned telecom companies in the region, such as Arabsat, Bahrain's Batelco and others, means that the provision of its services will not face huge regulatory hurdles in a region considered to be one of the most regulated in the world in regards to telecom services.

The second electronic Thuraya in Arab skies will benefit many sectors and people, however, it remains debatable whether the poets will have anything to benefit from it. After all, one can always resemble the beauty of a woman to a shining star, but can one resemble that same beauty to a geo-stationary electronic satellite orbiting the earth?

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IdealSoft develops an advanced software product for a US publisher

NINE MONTHS ago, IdealSoft, a leading Jordanian software development house, was contracted by an American firm, Advanced Technology Group, to develop a unique product which would be marketed in the United States and worldwide. This pioneering effort, put IdealSoft and its skilled software specialists to a test.

The results have been impressive, with the conclusion of the product, called Photo Album. Photo Album was developed using Advanced C++ after carefully studying the different requirements and steps involved in creating a pioneering piece of software.

Photo Album is an application that acts on an efficient database for photographs, which are entered through scanners, then stored and retrieved effectively in miniature form for ease of use and manipulation. An easy to use, Graphical User Interface (GUI) was implemented which guaranteed advanced functionality for

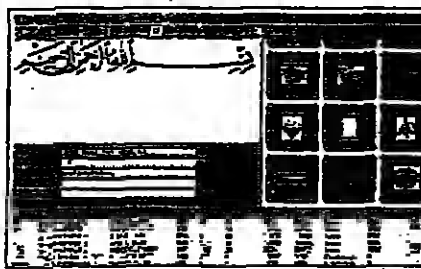


Photo Album users. Photo Album represents an indispensable tool for photographers, designers and journalists all of whom will benefit from it. Also, it can be utilized by real estate agents or sales representatives in general, who need to have digitally stored images of their products and offerings for quick presentation to clients and potential buyers.

Mr Imad Khaldoun Malhas, general manager of IdealSoft, commented on this achievement stating that Photo Album represents one of many pioneering projects that IdealSoft has worked on since it began operation in 1991. Today, IdealSoft provides comprehensive software solutions through

its varied departments and skilled personnel.

IdealSoft produces advanced ready-made packages in the fields of management and accounting, foremost of which is Al Muhaseb Al Mithall, the well-known Arabic accounting package. Also, through its 'DoIT' department, IdealSoft provides large, tailored software solutions to very demanding clients, incorporating complete information technology integration and utilizing advanced Oracle development.

Chairman of IdealSoft, Mr Karim Kassar, stated that the company was serious in its efforts to expand regionally, establishing development centers and sales arms in neighboring countries.

All in all, IdealSoft's achievement and experience in the software industry is a source of pride for Jordan, and a testament to the high levels of skill and expertise that Jordanian programmers can deliver both regionally and internationally.

What makes a great 'assembled' PCs?

Following is an email response we received from a reader abroad, who reads The Star's on-line edition, available on the Internet at address www.arabia.com/star. Thousands of readers log into The Star's site every week, from all over the world. Here is the 'enlightening' response:

Dear Sir:

Regarding the article "INTERFACE: The era of assembled PCs" by Zeid Nasser you clearly state that assembled PCs are inferior to factory assembled PCs. What components do engineers in Jordan use? In the United States, a carefully handmade PC outperforms any brand name computer such as Dell, IBM, Micron, Compaq, Gateway 2000, NEC, ... the list goes on. The problem with the factory assembled PCs is that the hard-

ware is proprietary, it is designed only for their case. Sometimes they even have soldered components such as soundcards or even CPU. The main issue is that almost all brand name PCs use cheaper components in order to be able to survive the price wars.

The best video adapters are from Matrox. It's the Matrox Millennium 3D which retails for \$249 in the US. Only Dell uses this video card. IBM and Sony use ATI, a good card but not the best. Micron, Gateway, ... use an S3 based chip, the worst adapter.

In order to build a fast machine, one needs to install the best Video adapter and couple that with a stand alone 3D card (any card using the 3dfx chip) for pure 3D performance.

The choice of a fast hard drive is also crucial, the Quantum Fireball would be a sound

choice. (By the way, Western Digital hard drives are not very reliable). Add a good video card to a good monitor such as a ViewSonic, NEC, Samsung, Sony, or AcerView, then you'd have a PC that no other can match.

Use these components with a 233 MHz MMX or a Pentium II 266MHz CPU with a generic Intel motherboard, a 24X CDROM, and the Sound Blaster 64 Gold, and you'll find yourself in computing heaven!

None of the factory PCs has great components all the way through.

If one can build his/her own system, then there is no excuse for the custom-made PC to be any slower than a brand name PC. The choice comes down to quality components.

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Europe's summer break disappears as Swiss soccer season begins

LONDON—European soccer fans who dread the summer break have nothing to fear this year, because there isn't going to be one.

For just seven days after Barcelona meet Real Betis in the Spanish Cup Final in Madrid to bring down the curtain on the 1996-97 season, the 1997-98 league season kicks off in Switzerland.

The Swiss league starts earlier than usual because of the national team's preparations for next year's World Cup finals in France. Switzerland play an all-important qualifier in Hungary, Aug. 20.

With the Spanish Cup Final taking place June 28, and the Swiss League starting July 5, the break between the seasons has been eroded—and that is not accounting for the Inter-

toto Cup matches which are played throughout the summer.

The competition, now in its third season, got underway last weekend, and continues until the end of August by which time some of Europe's biggest clubs may already have been eliminated from the European Cup.

That competition kicks off July 25 when the first legs of preliminary round are scheduled to be played. While there has been reports recently that FIFA want to introduce a new competition for continental champions clubs, introducing European soccer all-year round, the truth is, it has already arrived.

"There are still breaks, but they are less noticeable because action is still going



on in other places," FIFA spokesman Andreas Herren

said Tuesday.

In effect there will hardly be any break from competitive soccer in Europe for at least another two years—although there could be a brief respite for a few weeks from the middle of July next

year.

The World Cup is due to start in France June 10 and end July 12, 1998—with the chances high that some league or cup competitions will already be underway by the end of that month.

Barcelona says Ronaldo belongs to club

BARCELONA — Barcelona claim they still own Brazilian star Ronaldo and they will play him in the Spanish Cup final if Brazil fail to make the Copa America final.

"He's still a club player," said Barcelona president Jose Luis Nunez even though Ronaldo's lawyer said last Friday they had paid Barcelona the four billion pesetas (\$27.6 million) theoretically needed to make him a free agent.

The Spanish Football Federation have also refused to allow Inter Milan to sign Ronaldo without negotiating with Barcelona—a move they claim has been approved by FIFA.

"We cannot allow Ronaldo to move to Inter unless the Italian club talks to Barcelona," Spanish Federation spokesman Fernando Garrido said.



Villeneuve to fight back in France

CANADIAN JACQUES will be fighting to regain his world championship lead at the eighth round of the title chase at Magny-Cours in France on Sunday 29th June. Together with his teammates Williams Renault team-mate Heinz-Harald Frentzen, he will be testing at the 4.250 km (2.64 miles) French circuit next week in preparation for the grand prix. Villeneuve lost his championship lead to Canadian grand prix winner Michael Schumacher when he crashed out in Montreal. He trails the Ferrari driver by seven points as the championship reaches its half-way stage.

Frentzen lies fifth in the championship after finishing fourth in Canada. He shares the position with Frenchman Jean Alesi but only one point behind Eddie Irvine in fourth place. Third place Olivier Panis will miss the race at the circuit which is the home base for the Prost Grand Prix team, after breaking his legs in Canada. He looks likely to be replaced by either Emmanuel Collard or Williams test driver Jean-Christophe Boullion.

This will be the 83rd French Grand Prix and the seventh to be held at the Magny-Cours circuit which is situated near Nevers, in the Nièvre region. Eleven different circuits hosted the grand prix before the Sec-



ond World War with seven different venues being used in more modern times. Clermont-Ferrand hosted four grands prix with Jackie Stewart winning two races. Le Mans staged one race before the grand prix switched to the new Le Castellet circuit near Marseilles. Dijon then joined the venues with five grands prix, alternating with Le Castellet. In 1979 the race was won by Jean-Pierre Jabouille, giving Renault its first grand prix victory. It was also the setting for the first of Alain Prost's record-breaking 51 grands prix victories. The race returned on an exclusive basis to Le Castellet in 1985

with the dominant Prost winning 10 of his home fans in 1988/89 & 90. The following year in 1991 Magny Cours staged its first grand prix where both Nigel Mansell and Michael Schumacher have won twice.

The Magny-Cours circuit is a typically modern Formula one track. The old club circuit received a massive upgrading when the French President Mitterrand took a big interest in bringing the French Grand Prix to the region which is largely rural. The track is a modern day mix of slow corners, tight hairpins with excellent safety measures.

